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Textual Traditions and Religious Identities in the  
Pāñcarātra

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## *Abstract*

In this thesis I provide a study of the distinct traditions within the Pāñcarātra, concentrating especially on the ways in which these traditions' identities were formed by their textual allegiances. In Chapter One, I show that the so-called "three jewels" of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon were actually only considered as such by a minority of Pāñcarātrikas, and that this tradition arose much later than is commonly supposed. In Chapter Two I undertake a historical survey of the different groups within the Pāñcarātra as they are presented in the textual sources. In Chapter Three I argue that the tradition of the "three jewels" emerged within one of these groups, and that its eventual acceptance by other Pāñcarātrikas coincided with a decline in the "sectarianism" which had characterised relations between two Pāñcarātra traditions in particular. One of the outcomes of this decline, I argue, was the integration of previously distinct Pāñcarātrika identities, and the formation of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon. In Chapters Four and Five I undertake a closer historical analysis of these two major South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions, focussing especially on the ways in which they sought to establish their legitimacy through being connected with texts which were situated outside of the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus. As I show in a comparative study in Chapter Six, such strategies were also used by other Pāñcarātrikas who appealed to the authority of the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*. In Chapter Seven, I study the emergence of a distinct 'Pāñcarātra' identity in this text, and argue for its dependence on the appropriation and synthesis of other religious identities. In Chapters Eight and Nine, I address the merging of Pāñcarātrika identities in South India nearly a millennium later. Here I argue that we are now in a better position to explain the decline of the sectarian culture which had dominated certain South Indian Pāñcarātra contexts, and the question of why one of the two major South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions appears to have disappeared.



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## Introduction

### i.) General introduction to the Pāñcarātra and previous scholarship thereon

‘Pāñcarātra’ or ‘Pāñcarātra’ is the name of a religious tradition which worships Viṣṇu, or a deity assimilated to Viṣṇu (especially Nārāyaṇa or Vāsudeva), as the highest god. The names *pañcarātra*/*pāñcarātra* are also used to refer to the large scriptural corpus consisting of anonymously authored works in Sanskrit, ordinarily called *saṃhitā* (“compendium”), that were produced by the followers of this tradition. Although the individual *saṃhitās* cannot be dated with any precision, most of them appear to have been composed between the ninth and the fourteenth century of the Common Era. The earliest of the extant works were very probably written in North India, in and around Kashmir. The majority of the published works, however, are products of South India, and the period c. 1100-1400 CE. The *saṃhitās* are written, for the most part, in the same metre as the Sanskrit epics and much Classical Sanskrit poetry, namely the 32-syllable *anuṣṭubh śloka*. They are structured in the form of a dialogue, normally between sages or between a sage and god, in which one interlocutor instructs another in matters relating to the initiation rites by which one becomes a member of the tradition, the preparation for and performance of the post-initiatory worship of Viṣṇu, the rewards that can accrue from such worship, and various theological and cosmological topics.

As is attested in the earliest textual sources which refer to the Pāñcarātra, including the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*, a seventh century stele inscription from Baset in Cambodia (K. 447), Śaṅkara’s *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (on *sūtra* 2.2.42), and the earlier Pāñcarātra *saṃhitās* themselves, *pañcarātra* (i.e. with a short first *a*) is the older of the two names. The derived term *pāñcarātra*, meaning “pertaining to or belonging to the Pāñcarātra”, is occasionally used to refer to the followers of the tradition (see e.g. Kumāṛila’s *Tantravārttika*,<sup>1</sup> and Rāmakaṇṭha’s

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<sup>1</sup> On *sūtra* 1.3.4 (328.16-17), Kumāṛila mentions “the treatises [which are a mixture] of *dharma* and *adharma* [that are] accepted by the Sāṃkhyas, Yogas, Pāñcarātras, Pāśupatas, Buddhists and Jains” (*sāṃkhyayogapāñcarātrapāśupataśākyā[nir]granthapariṣṭadharmādharmānibandhanāni*).

*Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa* 87.22ff), though these are far more commonly called *pāñcarātri* or, less often, *pāñcarātrin*. In the later South Indian literature, however, *pāñcarātra* became an increasingly common way to refer to the tradition itself. This convention has continued down to modern times, and *pāñcarātra* is now the standard name for the tradition in scholarly literature. Accordingly, and in spite of its being frequently anachronistic, in the following I refer to the tradition as “Pāñcarātra” unless I am referring directly to a textual passage which uses the earlier designation.<sup>2</sup> The origins of the name are mysterious, and its original meaning has been subject to a wide variety of interpretations, both within the scriptural literature (see Smith 1980: 56-7), and among modern Indological studies (e.g. Schrader 1916: 24-6, van Buitenen 1962, Raghavan 1965, Neevel 1977: 8-10, Matsubara 1994: 123-27, Hudson 2002: 158-59), though none of these is wholly convincing.

The description of the Pāñcarātra as a “religious tradition” is itself not unproblematic. I refer here not so much to the qualifier “religious” which, as has been sufficiently demonstrated by a number of scholars (e.g. Halbfass 1988: 310-48, Hacker 1995), has no precise equivalent in Sanskrit, but rather to the term “tradition”. There are, indeed, a number of Sanskrit words which can be reasonably translated as “tradition” in this sense (e.g. *āgama*, *āmnāya*, *paramparā*, *pāramparya*, *sampradāya*), though in fact among these only *āgama* is regularly employed as a term of self-description by the authors of the Saṃhitās, principally to designate the scriptural corpus of the Pāñcarātra or a particular work within it. More commonly, the Pāñcarātra is characterised in its own literature as a teaching (*upaniṣad*, *śāstra*), a body of knowledge (*jñāna*), a system (*tantra*), a path (*mārga*), or a set of injunctions (*vidhi*, *vidhāna*). It is worth pointing out that while the noun *tantra* is frequently applied to the Pāñcarātra in the Saṃhitās, these texts rarely use the derived adjective *tāntrika* (“Tantric”, i.e. pertaining to the Tantra/s) when referring to their own rituals or adherents. In contrast, when the Pāñcarātra is characterised by outsiders, whether by its religious rivals (see e.g. Yāmuna’s *Āgamaprāmāṇya* 53.10-11) or, indeed, by

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<sup>2</sup> I also follow the scholarly convention of referring to a person or group of persons who worship Viṣṇu or one of his manifestations as “Vaiṣṇava”, though this is, again, frequently an anachronism.

modern scholars, this term is used quite often.<sup>3</sup> Modern scholars have described the Pāñcarātra variously, for example as a “cult” (Colas 1990, Matsubara 1994), a Vaiṣṇava and Tantric “sect” (Gupta 1991), “une école āgamique” (Colas 1995), and “[einer] wichtigen Strömung innerhalb der viṣṇuitischen Religion” (Bock-Raming 2002: 2).

The characterisation of the Pāñcarātra as a “religious tradition” is potentially problematic insofar as it can carry the implication that the Pāñcarātra is a single system of beliefs and practices, and that Pāñcarātrikas therefore share a single religious identity. However, even the most cursory reading of a number of Saṃhitās reveals a striking heterogeneity in their liturgical and theological material. In addition, a closer analysis of these works, as well as of other texts which refer to Pāñcarātrikas, shows that the Pāñcarātra consisted, very probably from its outset, of a diverse range of followers. Not uncommonly, one set of followers would distinguish themselves from another on the basis of their practices, their doctrines or their scriptural allegiance. In this thesis, I provide a historical study of the divisions within the Pāñcarātra as based on the available textual evidence. I show that scriptural allegiance became one of the crucial factors in distinguishing between distinct Pāñcarātrika identities, and that the formation of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon involved precisely the renegotiation of such allegiances.

The first in-depth study of the distinct traditions within the Pāñcarātra was provided by Rastelli (2006). This lengthy German language volume concentrates primarily on the fourfold division of the Pāñcarātra as described in several South Indian texts dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is my hope that this thesis will add to Rastelli’s important study. Although previous scholarship on the Pāñcarātra paid little attention to its internal divisions, and therefore to the distinct religious identities of the authors of the extant Saṃhitās, there have nonetheless been several important studies of the Pāñcarātra over the past century. The first major scholarly work was F. Otto Schrader’s *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā* (1916), which remains to this day a valuable introduction to the

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<sup>3</sup> When applied to the Pāñcarātra by its rivals, the term “Tantric” carries the primary sense of “non-Vedic” (*avaidika*). In other words, the allegiance of Pāñcarātrikas is to the Tantras *rather than* the Vedas. See also Colas (1990) and Hüsken (2009: 47, 111).

theogonic and cosmological speculations found in the Saṃhitās, despite the fact that it foregrounds a somewhat atypical Pāñcarātra text. The same year saw the publication of the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, critically edited by M. D. Ramanujacharya under Schrader's supervision. The next significant volumes in Pāñcarātra studies were E. Krishnamacharya's critical edition (based on South Indian manuscripts) of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (1931), and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar's edition and translation into English of the *Paramasaṃhitā* (1940). From the end of the 1960s, scholarship on the Pāñcarātra has gathered pace. Important early works during this period are H. Daniel Smith's *A Sourcebook of Vaiṣṇava Iconography According to Pāñcarātrāgama Texts* (1969), and his indispensable two-volume *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgama* (1975; 1980), containing a chapter-by-chapter summary of over thirty published works, as well as several unpublished ones, and a comprehensive subject index. The chapters on the Pāñcarātra in Gonda's *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit* (1977) are heavily indebted to this study. Also from this period, Sanjukta Gupta's translation into English of the *Lakṣmītantra* (1972) generated a greater interest in the Pāñcarātra among scholars, though its value to modern scholarship on this subject is somewhat limited by the fact that, like the focus of Schrader's pioneering study, the *Lakṣmītantra* is an atypical Pāñcarātra text. Over the next two decades, Gupta produced several important articles, including a diachronic study of the role of initiation (*dīkṣā*) in Pāñcarātra scriptures (1983). V. Varadachari's *Āgamas and South Indian Vaiṣṇavism* (1982) contains valuable information on a wide variety of texts, as does M. Matsubara's *Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and Early Vaiṣṇava Theology* (1994), which can be viewed as a more comprehensive and up-to-date undertaking of Schrader's project. No doubt a consequence of its being published by a small Indian publishing house, Varadachari's book has not been cited much in subsequent scholarship, a fate that has also befallen, for similar reasons, H. Hikita's very useful annotated translations (published separately in Japan from 1990) of most of the chapters of the *Sātvatasāṃhitā*.

In an important sense Hikita's work on the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* represents a turning point in Pāñcarātra studies: the first closely annotated translation of a Pāñcarātra Saṃhitā which frequently cross-references other Pāñcarātra texts. Since then, the

*Īśvarasaṃhitā* has been critically edited and translated into English by M. A. Lakshmithathachar, with revisions by V. Varadachari (2009). Subsequent to Hikita's work, scholarship on the Pāñcarātra has tended to focus on one text, or on certain chapters of a text, in particular. Thus, Flood (1992, 2000, 2006) has concentrated in several studies on particular chapters of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*. Hikita (2005) has written a lengthy article on the installation of divine images in the *Sātvatasāṃhitā*. Most prominently, Rastelli (1999, 2006) and Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003) have produced book-length studies on, respectively, philosophical-cum-theological beliefs in the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, representations of the Pāñcarātra in the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, and the layered composition of the *Paramasaṃhitā*, though Rastelli (2006), especially, also incorporates detailed analysis of other Pāñcarātra texts. Both of these authors have also published important articles on subjects related to Pāñcarātra ritual. These studies fundamentally differ from the earlier works of, for instance, Schrader, Varadachari and Matsubara, all of which attempt to find commonalities among Pāñcarātra texts, and so reach general conclusions about "the Pāñcarātra tradition". To be sure, studies on particular topics or themes within the Pāñcarātra corpus continue to be produced, as for example Sferra (1994), Bock-Raming (2002), and Rastelli (2002a), but these now tend to be the exception rather than the rule, and they ordinarily address more circumscribed subjects than e.g. Pāñcarātra "theology" or "philosophy", as well as being generally sensitive to the heterogeneous contents of the Saṃhitās.

## ii.) *The role of scripture in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās*

Over the past quarter of a century or so, several scholarly works in the field of Indian religions (see e.g. the contributions in Levering 1989, Timm 1992, and Patton 1994; see also Flood 1999, 2006, 2006a) have sought to redress a perceived imbalance in the broader discipline of "religious studies" – namely, the tendency among scholars to downplay the importance of scriptural traditions within religions, and of textual

studies within the academic study of religion. This tendency had, arguably, characterised a good deal of scholarship over the previous half century, and might itself be usefully interpreted as a corrective to the well-documented overemphasis on scriptural traditions that was initiated primarily by Protestant philologists during the nineteenth century. Timm (1992: 2) has summarised this initial shift in focus:

Stationing themselves within the discipline of the “history of religions,” scholars dissatisfied with the limitations of the “textual” approach to the study of religion shifted the primary focus onto the so-called primitive or archaic forms of religious expression, downplaying the importance of the scriptural and commentarial traditions in favor of uncovering foundational categories and motifs through which they hoped to reveal the universal patterns and qualities of human religious expression.

This particular approach to religion as a *sui generis* phenomenon has been adopted most prominently by scholars working in the field of the “phenomenology of religion”, most notably Gerardus van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade and their methodological heirs. However, as McCutcheon (1997: 14ff) has observed, the Schleiermacherian prioritisation of “inner” or “subjective” religious experience over “interpersonally available” historical data (texts, artefacts etc.) can by no means be limited, within the study of religion, to the phenomenologists. In his book *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion*, Flood (1999: 47, 50) offers a critique of the ahistorical emphasis on “inner experience” and argues instead for a historicist approach to religions, understanding the latter primarily as “value-laden” and, re Lactantius, “binding” narratives and behaviours which are “articulated in texts” (my emphasis). Elsewhere, Flood (2006a: 52) takes the term “religion” to refer, *par excellence*, “to forms of human practice communally arrived at which are constrained by a text or group of texts set aside and regarded as sacred.”<sup>4</sup> Addressing Indian textual history, Flood (2006: 49) highlights the significance of the “Tantric” traditions being *scriptural*, noting that “Tantric practices are always textually substantiated”, and that in the Tantric context “text is inseparable from tradition”. This last idea is helpfully conveyed by the fact that in the Tantric literature, the term

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<sup>4</sup> “Religion”, writes Flood (2006a: 52), can be taken “to refer prototypically to a historical tradition that is formed by text and continuously refers back to that text.”

*tantra* can mean both “text” and “tradition”, the latter being denoted, for instance, in the stock phrase *asmin tanre* (see Padoux 1998). In addition, just as the adjective “Vedic” (*vaidika*) designates first and foremost a *textual* tradition or orientation (rather than the derived sense marking a historical period), so too the term “Tantric” (*tāntrika*) refers to particular *texts*, to rites prescribed in these texts, and to identities constrained by them. It is notable that in the context of Tantric (as distinct from “Purāṇic”) Śaivism, as Hanneder (1998: 5) explains, the word *śaiva* does not denote “a worshipper of Śiva”, but rather one who follows a scripture that is taught by Śiva.

Turning to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, how is the role of scripture understood and articulated therein? Can a common understanding of the place and purpose of scripture be detected within this large and diverse body of literature? Is it possible, in other words, to speak of a Pāñcarātra attitude to scripture or are there, rather, a variety of attitudes, each of them peculiar to one or other text, tradition or historical period? First of all, it should be stated that the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus evolved over a long period of time. Over five hundred years separate the composition of the earliest Saṃhitās at our disposal from the composition of the most recent. Accordingly, it is obviously true that when the earliest works were written, a Pāñcarātra “scriptural corpus” did not exist as it did for the authors of the youngest texts. This is also true of the earliest of the *published* Saṃhitās, namely the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), the *Sātvatasamhitā* (SS) and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauS). In these works there are not many clues, outside of clearly interpolated material,<sup>5</sup> to an already existing Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition.<sup>6</sup>

In the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (at 22.3a) we find a single, passing reference to the “Bhagavaddharma Tantras”, mentioned alongside “those who observe the [ritual teaching of the] five times” and, as we will see below, there are a number of verses in this work in which the teaching (*śāstra*) and those who know it are praised, but these

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<sup>5</sup> I refer here to the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* section of the JS, and to PauS 38.295-39.39 (on which see Smith 1975: 296).

<sup>6</sup> The *Sātvatasamhitā* and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* both provide notable exceptions: the former with its reference to “those who are learned in the Saṃhitās” (*saṃhitāpāragāṇām*, SS 20.4c) – the context suggests that this must be a reference to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās; I discuss the relevant passage in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (41.77-97) below. It is also worth noting that if we discount the interpolated *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* section of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, the three earliest of the published Saṃhitās contain no mention of each other.



instances provide scant evidence of a scriptural tradition peculiar to the Pāñcarātra.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it is telling that a “knower of the Śāstra” (*śāstrajñā*) is identified in the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* as “a Vaiṣṇava who knows the Purāṇa, the Dharmaśāstras and the Vaiṣṇava legends (*itihāsa*), who listens to the doctrines of the Vedānta (i.e. the Upaniṣads) and also explains [their meaning], and who, after carefully discussing the import of [scriptural] statements belonging to lost traditions of recitation (*pranaṣṭapāṭha*)<sup>8</sup> together with [other] knowers of that [import], tirelessly pieces together (*saṃskaroti*) a sacred text (*āgama*).<sup>9</sup> In this definition of a “knower of the Śāstra”, then, there is no mention of texts belonging specifically to the Pāñcarātra. Both the “knower of the Śāstra” and the collectively assembled “sacred text” or “scripture” (*āgama*) are located, rather, within a textual tradition that is *smārta* (in the sense of being based upon scriptural statements which are “remembered” rather than directly “heard”),<sup>10</sup> and simply “Vaiṣṇava”.<sup>11</sup>

The broadly Vaiṣṇava identity of the scriptural tradition acknowledged by the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* is also apparent in the section which follows the identification of the “knower of the Śāstra”. This passage addresses the role of the *śāstradhāraka*, who is responsible for preserving and transmitting the scriptures:

<sup>7</sup> Both the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (elsewhere at 1.12 and 1.40ab) and the *Paṇḍarasaṃhitā* (30.38, 31.200) refer to their own tradition, on a couple of occasions, as *Bhagavaddharma*. The verse heading at JS 22.3 equates the *Bhagavaddharma* with the *dharma* of the Bhāgavatas, who are alternatively called ‘Vaiṣṇava’ in the same chapter (see 22.1, 56cd).

<sup>8</sup> The compound *pranaṣṭapāṭhavākyānām*, and thus the verse in which it occurs, can be interpreted differently. See e.g. Colas (1995: 131 n. 37): “Ayant pratiqué la conjecture du sens correct des passages dont la leçon est corrompue, avec l’aide des connaisseurs de ces (textes), il perfectionne l’Āgama, avec zèle et sans se lasser”. Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 40) gives a similar reading.

<sup>9</sup> JS 22.51c-53: *purāṇaṃ dharmasāstrāṇi itihāsāṃś ca vaiṣṇavān // veti vedāntasiddhāntān śṛṇuyād vyākaroti api / pranaṣṭapāṭhavākyānām kṛtvā vastuvicāraṇam // tajjñais saha prayatnād vai hy āgamaṃ saṃskaroti yaḥ / atandritaḥ sadā viddhi taṃ śāstrajñam hi vaiṣṇavam //*

<sup>10</sup> See Pollock’s (1997: 408) summary of the *śruti/smṛti* distinction in “classical Sanskrit culture”: “In short, *śruti* means nothing other than “(Veda) actually now perceived aurally (in recitation)”, i.e. extant or available; *smṛti*, nothing other than “(Veda) that is remembered”, i.e., material that, having once been heard in recitation is inferentially recoverable from present reformulations (in language or practice), which once existed as part of a Vedic corpus.” Pollock (ibid.: 409) goes on to explain: “Early Mīmāṃsā [as articulated in the *Śābarabhāṣya* and the *Tantravārttika*] holds that the *smṛtis* are derived from Vedic recensions now forgotten or geographically or otherwise inaccessible to us; Nyāya [as articulated, for example, in Udayana’s *Nyāyakusumāñjali*] reasons that these recensions must have actually disappeared”. On the basis of this description, it would appear that the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*’s conception of “lost traditions of recitation” (*pranaṣṭapāṭha*) corresponds more closely to the Naiyāyika account.

<sup>11</sup> The “knower of the *śāstra*” (*śāstrajñāḥ*) is also identified simply as a “Vaiṣṇava” at JS 1.58.

*śraddhayā yaḥ samuccitya yatra kutracid āgamam / brahma dhyāyaṃs tathā paścāt sandhārayati yatnataḥ // pūjayaty arghyapuṣpādyaś śāstrapīṭhaṃ krameṇa tu / dadāti vaiṣṇavānāṃ ca gopayaty akṛtātmanām // anyadarśanabhaktānāṃ viddhi taṃ śāstradhārakam /* – “Know that a *śāstradhāraka* is one who, having faithfully assembled the scripture (*āgama*) wherever it is [diversely found], then carefully retains it in his memory, [all the while] meditating on *brahman*, and who worships the *śāstrapīṭha* in the appropriate way with *arghya* and flowers etc., and who imparts [the scripture] to Vaiṣṇavas, and conceals it from the unprepared devotees of other systems (*darśana*).” (JS 22.54-56b)

The idea that Vaiṣṇavas belong to the same “system”, or share a common “point of view” (*darśana*, on this term see Halbfass 1988: 263-286) is echoed also in the *Sātvatasamhitā* (22.26-27b). According to the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, in which both of the above quoted passages are found, Vaiṣṇavas are born into a “great lineage” (*mahākula*, JS 22.4d) whose members are devoted exclusively to the Bhāgavata *dharma* and who, as mentioned above, observe the ritual teaching of the “five times” (*pañcakāla*) and follow the Bhagavaddharma Tantras (JS 22.3). It is notable that the devotees of Viṣṇu who adhere to the ritual system set forth in the *Jayākhyasamhitā* are most commonly referred to as *vaiṣṇava*, rather than as *pāñcarātri*. Indeed, if we discount the colophons and the interpolated *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* section, it is striking how infrequently the terms *pāñcarātra* and *pāñcarātri* occur in the *Jayākhyasamhitā*. As we will see repeatedly below, this is in stark contrast to the later *Samhitās*, especially those composed in South India, and it suggests that in the time and place of the composition of the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, the distinctions between *Pāñcarātrikas* and other Vaiṣṇavas were less clear than they would later become.<sup>12</sup> We might bear this in mind when we consider the idea of “scripture” (*āgama*) or Śāstra in *Pāñcarātra* texts of this earlier period.

The passage describing the *śāstradhāraka* is also of particular interest in the present context on account of its reference to the worship of the “seat” of Śāstras (*śāstrapīṭha*). It is noteworthy that several *Pāñcarātra* works, including the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, the *Sātvatasamhitā* and the *Pauṣkarasamhitā*, refer to the worship of texts in their written form, whether collectively, as part of a *śāstrapīṭha*, or

<sup>12</sup> The *Sātvatasamhitā*, the *Pauṣkarasamhitā* and the *Paramasamhitā* (ParS) also address themselves primarily to “Vaiṣṇavas” rather than to *Pāñcarātrikas*. See e.g. SS 12.170, 16.10, 19.2, 21.46ab; PauṣS 20.111, 27.128ab, 31.212, 36.256; ParS 3.52-56, 5.74, 7.1-26, 16.2, 57-8, 19.48, 26.76, 29.33.

otherwise.<sup>13</sup> The *śāstrapīṭha* mentioned here is the same as the *vidyāpīṭha*, the “seat of knowledge”, or in Brunner-Lachaux’s (1963: 226 n. 2) words the “throne of wisdom” (*trône-de-sagesse*), that is met with quite frequently in Śaiva literature.<sup>14</sup> Indeed both the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (21.23cd) and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (41.91, 97cd) refer to it also as the *vidyāpīṭha*. Of these two works, the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (at 41.77-97) contains the much fuller description of the *śāstrapīṭha*, and includes information on the texts that are to be worshipped there. In this account, the “entire collection of Pāñcarātra [teachings], beginning with the Sadāgama” (I discuss the notion *sadāgama* below in Chapter Five) is included alongside the Vedas and their auxiliary “limbs” (*vedāṅga*), the Smṛtis and other “remembered” works (*smṛtyantara*), the Itihāsas, and works on philosophy and grammar.<sup>15</sup> These texts are tied together with cord and placed in caskets on a metal yantra in a whitewashed stone sanctuary that is decorated with a portrait of the goddess Vāgīśvarī holding a bundle of Śāstras (PauṣS 41.80c-84). The adept then worships the manuscripts (*pustaka*) which are collectively called Viṣṇu’s “body of pure knowledge” (*viśuddhajñānadeha*, PauṣS 41.88). The text says that Viṣṇu is to be worshipped in the form of the Vedas and Upaniṣads adorned with the Sadāgama etc. (i.e. the Pāñcarātra scriptures) and the divine Purāṇas etc. (*bhagavatpurāṇādyā*, PauṣS 41.90). This seat of Śāstras (*śāstrapīṭha*), or knowledge (*vidyāpīṭha*), is “made of the word-*brahman*” (*śabdabrahmamayam*), and it should be worshipped daily (PauṣS 41.91).

As is indicated by the inclusion of works of philosophy and grammar, in this description of the *śāstrapīṭha* the term *śāstra* has a broader designation than “scripture” as is ordinarily understood. In the Pāñcarātra literature, the term *śāstra* is

<sup>13</sup> As well as mentioning the *śāstrapīṭha* (SS 25.377a), the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* also contains the injunction that “the teaching relating to the highest lord is not to be opened without being worshipped” (*nāpujitaṃ samudghāṭyaṃ śāsanam pārameśvaram*, SS 21.16ab). See also the precept for worshipping the “pure” and “divine” collection of scriptures (*āgamasamcaya*) at SS 20.13-14b. Elsewhere in the scriptural corpus, the worship of texts in their written form is prescribed, for example, in the *Viṣvakṣenasāṃhitā* (37.14cff), the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (12.149c-150b) and the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (14.225cff).

<sup>14</sup> See for example Aghoraśivācārya’s *Kriyākramadyotikā* p.119-120 – information from Brunner-Lachaux (1963: 226-227) – the *Tantrāloka* (28.156b), and the *Yogakhaṇḍa* of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* (folio 86a) – information from Dyczkowski (1988: 158 n. 280). Dyczkowski writes here: “*Vidyāpīṭha* in the [Śaiva] Siddhānta refers to the Āgama in general viewed as an object of veneration. The worship of the sacred scripture is a way of worshipping Śiva.”

<sup>15</sup> PauṣS 41.78-79: *pariśuddhān samuccitya pañcarātrīyasañcayān / sadāgamādikān kṛtsnān vedavedāṅgasamvyutān // smṛtismṛtyantaropetān itihāsasamanvitān / ānvīkṣakībhīr vidyābhis saśabdākhyābhisamvyūtān //*

broadly used to denote any teaching which imparts sacred knowledge, which is to say knowledge that is ultimately derived from god. Of course this includes the Saṃhitās, which frequently refer to themselves as *śāstra*,<sup>16</sup> but it is not limited to them. Thus, it is commonly said that the Pāñcarātriaka preceptor, i.e. the *guru* or *ācārya*,<sup>17</sup> whose duty it is to reveal the Śāstra to other initiates (see e.g. JS 18.69-70, SS 22.15c-16b, *Īśvarasaṃhitā* 22.38ff), must be learned in other teachings in addition to the Saṃhitās.<sup>18</sup> For this reason, in the following when I translate *śāstra* I do so with the word “teaching”, and I reserve the term “scripture” for the Sanskrit *āgama* which, as mentioned above, refers more narrowly to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus or to a particular text within it.

Insofar as the worship of manuscripts does not appear to be confined to one particular Pāñcarātra tradition, to one category of Pāñcarātriaka initiate,<sup>19</sup> or to one historical period, this practice provides a good indication of the central importance of texts in the religious lives of Pāñcarātrikas. This is also attested to by the prescriptions for the practice of textual study (*svādhyāya*, *adhyayana*), which we find throughout the literature. Listening to, contemplating (*cintana*), reciting, and expounding upon (*vyākhyāna*) texts is enjoined for all initiates (see e.g. JS 16.301-314b, SS 21.8). In the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (41.61cd), some of the texts to be studied are named – the *R̥gveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Itihāsa*. In later works, such as the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (cp 13.66c-72b) and the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* (17.55-57b), other texts are added to this list: the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharmaśāstras*, and texts of the Pāñcarātra.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. JS 18.69-70, 33.86ab, SS 21.42, *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* 54.135ab, *Īśvarasaṃhitā* 25.217.

<sup>17</sup> Gonda (1965: 240) has shown that the term *guru* has had, from the time of “the earliest texts” a much broader semantic range than has *ācārya*, primarily insofar as it has not always exclusively denoted a “spiritual teacher” but has also been applied to “other venerable or respectable persons, to father, mother, or any relative older than one’s self.” However, in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās the terms *guru* and *ācārya* are usually synonymous (see e.g. JS 16.329, SS 20.2-3, *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 15.44-45, *Lakṣmītantra* 21.41. For exceptions, see e.g. JS 20.139c-140b, and *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā Brahmarātra* 5.14c-30b). In keeping with its traditionally more specific denotation, *ācārya* is usually the term used when the fourfold hierarchy of Pāñcarātriaka initiates is enumerated i.e. the series *samayin*, *putraka*, *sādhaka* and *ācārya*, though the terms *guru* and *deśika* are also occasionally applied to this role (e.g. JS 16.329, PauṣS 33.24, SS 20.2-3, 22.61c).

<sup>18</sup> These normally include the Vedas and their auxiliary limbs (*vedāṅga*), and the Upaniṣads (*vedānta*). See e.g. *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 20.1ff, *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* 16.1-12, *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* 3.2-6.

<sup>19</sup> On occasion, the worship of texts is prescribed for a particular category of initiate (e.g. for the *putraka* at SS 20.13-14, or for the *sādhaka* at JS 17.33c-34 and *Viśvakṣenasaṃhitā* 37.4c-15b), but elsewhere it is enjoined for the initiate in more general terms (e.g. SS 21.16ab, 25.377, and PauṣS 41.77ff).

The centrality of the study of texts for Pāñcarātrikas is most clearly conveyed by the fact that this practice was enshrined in the daily routine of initiates known as the “five times” (*pañcakāla*). This consists of the performance of the following five ritual duties at five different times of the day: i.) “approaching” god (*abhigamana*) by means of mantra-repetition (*japa*) and the singing of hymns of praise (*stotra*). This is to be performed before sunrise, during the period known as *brahmanuhūrta*; ii.) Having arisen, the next period of the day (lasting one *prahara*, approximately three hours) is to be spent gathering the materials (such as flowers, fruits etc.) for worship. This duty is called *upādāna* (“acquiring” or “appropriating”); iii.) Then, worship of god (*ijyā*) is to be performed, for about four and a half hours according to the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (22.71c); iv.) This is followed by the study of texts (*svādhyāya*), which consists of listening to a recital, contemplating its meaning, and then reciting and expounding upon the text oneself. According to the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, this lasts a further three hours (or one *prahara*); v.) Finally, at the end of the day, one should perform *pūjā* and follow this with meditation (*yoga*), which should then continue intermittently through the night. This description of the five duties at five times is a summary of passages in the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (22.64c-74b) and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (38.283-292), which offer very similar accounts. As Rastelli (2000a, 2006: 86-91) has shown, although neither of these texts nor the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* place particular emphasis on this fivefold schema, and do not prescribe its performance for all initiates, in many of the later *Samhitās*, and in other works which describe Pāñcarātra rituals, the performance of these rites at the “five times” is shown to be incumbent upon *all* Pāñcarātrikas.

Thus, the study of texts, including those other than the Pāñcarātra *Samhitās*, became a daily duty for initiates. As we have seen above, Pāñcarātrikas were also enjoined to worship texts other than their own scriptures. How, then, do the *Samhitās* distinguish themselves from these other texts? As we will see repeatedly below, one of the most common ways in which the Pāñcarātra scriptures are distinguished from other Śāstras is that they alone are capable of conferring liberation from worldly suffering. The importance that the *Samhitās* accord themselves in the lives of initiates (*śiṣya*) is also evident from the passages, often found at the very end of a work, that

enumerate the merits which accrue from hearing the teaching (*śravaṇaphala* or *phalaśruti*). A few examples will suffice: “Should one who is a Vaiṣṇava of pure mind hear this Tantra, the sins he committed in former lifetimes will vanish... A man who dilligently reads this [Tantra], or who teaches it [to another], his sin perishes and [his] devotion is regarded as exceptional.”<sup>20</sup> “This Tantra bestows longevity and health, and increases fame, beauty and wealth. It destroys sins and is assuredly the means to *yoga*.”<sup>21</sup> “God is pleased with he who reads this [Tantra] with devotion. Liberation is in the palm of his hand, and he is freed from his sins.”<sup>22</sup> According to the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (1.57cd), the two goals of the initiate, namely liberation from *saṃsāra* (*mokṣa*) and worldly “enjoyments” (*bhoga*), are both “dependent upon Śāstra” (*śāstrāyattā*).

The *Samhitās* are accessible only to those who have undergone the ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*) into the Pāñcarātra (see e.g. JS 33.86ab, SS 21.42), though not all texts agree upon whether all initiates are authorised to access them. Thus, the *Sātvatasamhitā* (22.15c-16) states that the lowest rank of initiate, the follower of the general observances (*samayin*), is eligible to learn the Śāstra from the preceptor (*deśika*), and to deliberate upon (*vicārayati*) its meaning, while the *Sanatkumārasamhitā* (*Brahmarātra* 5.120cd) describes Samayins as “not knowing the Tantras” (*atantrajñā*).<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that initiation is required to access these texts distinguishes them from the other Śāstras mentioned above, which Pāñcarātrikas also study and worship. As we will see below, especially in Chapter Four, the Pāñcarātra *Samhitās* commonly present themselves, like the Śaiva Tantras (see

<sup>20</sup> *Paramasamhitā* 31.66, 68: *ya idaṃ śruṇuyāt tantraṃ vaiṣṇavaḥ śuddhamānasaḥ / tasya pāpāni naśyanti janmāntarakṛtāni ca // ... // yaḥ paṭhed ādarād etat tat pāṭhayati vā naraḥ / tasyāpi pāpaṃ kṣarati viśeṣā bhaktir iṣyate //*

<sup>21</sup> *Viṣvakṣenasamhitā* 8.7: *āyur ārogyadaṃ nṛṇāṃ kīrtiśrīpuṣṭivardhanam* (corr. *kīrtiśrīputra-vardhanam*\*) */ pāpakṣayaṃ mahāpuṇyaṃ yogasādhanaṃ eva ca //*. \* This correction is suggested by the editor.

<sup>22</sup> *Bhārgavatantra* 25.26c-27b: *etat yaḥ paṭhate bhaktyā tasmin devaḥ prasīdati // tasya muktih karatale sa pāpebhyaḥ pramucyate //*

<sup>23</sup> The fourfold hierarchy of initiates (*samayin*, *putraka*, *sādhaka*, *ācārya*) which is found in some but not all Pāñcarātra works, has been addressed by several scholars (e.g. Gupta 1983, Rastelli 2000, 2000a). Very often the descriptions of these categories of initiate in one text will conflict with those found in another. The classification is itself neither unique nor original to the Pāñcarātra, and is found more commonly in the Śaiva Tantras.

Sanderson 1988), as transmitting a higher, more specialised revelation for those who are already initiated into the Veda.

The ritual of initiation is led by the *ācārya* or *guru*, who uses a *Samhitā* as his guide. The initiate appears to have a special relationship with the text by which he joins the community of practitioners – according to the *Jayākhyasamhitā* (16.301), this is his “own Śāstra”, and he should protect it as if it were his own body (*gopanīyaṃ svaśāstraṃ ca rakṣaṇīyaṃ śarīravat*, JS 16.301cd). The *Sātvatasamhitā* (17.138) also recommends that one worships and protects (*gopana*) the scripture (*āgama*) by which one has commenced one’s religious practice. However, as Rastelli (1999: 31) has pointed out, the majority of the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, for instance, appears to be addressed primarily to the preceptor, with several chapters also clearly intended for the *sādhaka*, the category of initiate beneath the *ācārya*. Although it is not expressly stated, it may have been the case that only certain parts of this and other *Samhitās* were accessible to the other initiates.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, the bulk of these texts have the function of manuals which are intended to guide the preceptor through the officiation of rituals. So far as the *other* participants in the ritual are concerned, it is the preceptor, rather than the text, which acts as the guide. Hence, in the context of the ritual, the *guru* or *ācārya* is truly the one who reveals the scripture, and in this sense he is akin to god (see e.g. JS 5.8d, 16.363, SS 17.128ab, 18.121cd, PauṣS 32.69, 33.24, *Lakṣmītantra* 21.41d, 23.4cd), and should be worshipped as god is worshipped (JS 21.76cd, SS 8.96cd, 20.33-34b, 40, PauṣS 30.213ab). In fact, according to the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, the *guru* is more important than both the Śāstra and god:

*vibhoḥ śāstrasya ca guros tritayasyāsyā pūjanāt // phalaṃ bhavaty anūnaṃ vai  
iha loke paratra ca / nārāyaṇaḥ paraṃ brahma tajjñānenābhigamyate //  
jñānasya sādhanam śāstraṃ tac chāstraṃ guruvaktragam / brahmaprāptir ato  
hetor gurvadhīnā sadaiva hi // hetunā 'nena vai viprā gurur gurutamaḥ smṛtaḥ  
/ yasmād devo jagannāthaḥ kṛtvā martyamayīm tanum // magnān uddharate  
lokān kārūṇyāc chāstrapāṇinā / tasmād bhaktir gurau kāryā  
saṃsārabhayabhīruṇā // śāstrāñjanena yo 'jñānatimiraṃ vinipātayet / śāstraṃ  
pāpaharam puṇyaṃ pavitraṃ bhogamokṣadam // śāntidaṃ ca mahārtham ca  
vakti yas sa jagadguruḥ /* – “From the worship of this triad of Lord, Śāstra and

<sup>24</sup> Since some texts, as I have mentioned above, clearly grant other initiates access to the scriptures – for instance the *Sātvatasamhitā* calls the *putraka* a knower of the Śāstra (*śāstrajña*) – this issue appears to be one on which we cannot reach general conclusions.

guru, the entire fruit comes into being both in this world and in the next life. Nārāyaṇa, the supreme *brahman*, is attained with this knowledge. Śāstra is the means of accomplishing this knowledge, and Śāstra is in the mouth of the guru. Hence, attainment of *brahman* is always dependent upon the guru as the cause, and on account of this, O Brahmins, the guru is considered to be the most important [of the triad]. Because God, the lord of the universe, after making a mortal body [for himself] out of compassion, lifts up people who are immersed [in the ocean of *saṃsāra*] with the hand of scripture, therefore devotion to the guru should be performed with fear and dread of *saṃsāra*. One who can dispel the darkness of ignorance with the ointment of the teaching, who proclaims the teaching that removes evil, and is meritorious, purifying, and granting of enjoyments and liberation, which bestows tranquility and is the highest teaching (*mahārtham*), he is a world-teacher (*jagadguru*).” (JS 1.60c-66b)

A similar hierarchy is present in the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* (SanS).<sup>25</sup>

We can conclude this short survey by noting that there are, then, a number of quite general statements that can reasonably be made concerning the role of scripture in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. Pāñcarātrikas routinely worshipped the manuscripts of their own scriptures as well as other texts, while the practice of textual study (*svādhyāya*) became a daily duty incumbent upon all initiates. Initiation into the Pāñcarātra granted access to at least sections of the scriptural corpus, and Pāñcarātrikas were exhorted by the authors of the Saṃhitās to safeguard the text with which their own initiation was conducted. Large parts of the Saṃhitās are clearly intended to guide the preceptor through his officiation of rituals, and would thus be accessible to the other initiates through his mediation. Insofar as the preceptor is responsible for revealing these parts of the Saṃhitās to the other initiates, his role is akin to that of god, through whom the revelation of scripture first took place. Certain textual passages praise the guru above both scripture and god on the basis that without

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<sup>25</sup> SanS *Brahmarātra* 10.51-54: *laukikaṃ vaidikaṃ cāpi tathādhyātmikam eva ca / trividhaṃ tat samuddiṣṭaṃ pradhānaṃ cottarottaram // laukikaṃ tv arthaśāstrādi vaidikaṃ vedasaṃyutam / adhyātmajñānam anyac ca yogatantrādi kathyate // yogatantreṣu sarveṣu viṣṇutantram anuttamam / viṣṇutantreṣu sarveṣu pañcarātraṃ viśiṣyate // pañcarātre tathā mantrā mantreṣv artho viśiṣyate / artheṣv apy upadeśaś ca nopadeśāt paraṃ tataḥ //* – “That [knowledge, *vidyā*] is threefold and is, in ascending order of importance, worldly, Vedic, and relating to the Self. ‘Worldly’ knowledge [is imparted in] the Arthaśāstra and so on, ‘Vedic’ knowledge is connected with the Vedas, and knowledge of the Self is discussed in such works as the Yoga Tantras. Among all Yoga Tantras, the Viṣṇu Tantra is supreme. The Pāñcarātra is best among all Viṣṇu Tantras, and in the Pāñcarātra it is the mantras [that are most important]. With regard to the mantras, the referent [i.e. the deity] is most important, and with regard to the referents, instruction [i.e. from a guru, is the most important element]. Thus, there is nothing higher than instruction.”



him, scripture, and therefore god, would remain inaccessible to the ordinary initiate. However, it is to be noted that this hierarchy is authoritative precisely because it is substantiated by scripture.

My reason for emphasising here the importance of scripture, and of texts generally, in the religious lives of Pāñcarātrikas is as follows. In this thesis I argue that from the study of these texts we can learn a great deal about the identities of those who authored and used them. The fact that the religious practices of Pāñcarātrikas are, to recall Flood's words, "textually substantiated", allows us to track the changes that the ritual repertoire of one particular Pāñcarātra tradition, or text, underwent. Such changes can teach us something about the traditions that used these texts. Not only this, Pāñcarātrika identities were established alongside the classification of Pāñcarātra texts, and their appeals to texts outside of the Pāñcarātra corpus. As I will show in the following, the most prominent division between separate Pāñcarātra traditions was demarcated precisely by their textual allegiance. Moreover, the subsequent emergence of a single, integrated Pāñcarātrika identity was fashioned alongside the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon.

### *iii.) Sources and methods*

In S. Parampurushdas and S. Shrutiprakashdas' *Catalogue of Pañcarātra Saṃhitā* (2002), 460 Pāñcarātra titles are named, of which 313 are of texts which are listed or mentioned in the Saṃhitās, but of which there is otherwise no record. According to this catalogue, there are 147 extant Pāñcarātra works, of which 112 remain unpublished. Many of these are incomplete, and some exist only in fragmentary form. Of the 35 published Saṃhitās listed, the *Agastyasaṃhitā* is certainly not a Pāñcarātra text, as Smith (1975: 3-4) has already correctly pointed out, though it has been wrongly identified as one in the colophons of some of its South Indian manuscripts. Subsequent to the publication of this catalogue, the *Prakāśasaṃhitā* has been made available online by members of the now defunct Sansknet project, meaning that there

are at present 35 Pāñcarātra scriptural works published or otherwise readily accessible. For the following study I have consulted 21 of these, three of which, namely the late and thoroughly unrepresentative *Jñānāmṛtasārasaṃhitā* (also known as the *Nārada Pāñcarātra*), the *Kāśyapaśaṃhitā*, and the aforementioned *Prakāśasaṃhitā*, I do not refer to again. In addition, I have made use of the two published commentaries on Pāñcarātra works, both written by the same author, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar Alaṅkābhāṭṭa. These are the commentary on the *Sātvataśaṃhitā* called the *Sātvataśāstrabhāṣya*, and the commentary on the *Īśvaraśaṃhitā* called the *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā*.

The study of the Pāñcarātra literature is still in its infancy, and several of the works which I have used for this thesis have received almost no prior scholarly attention. Those working on this large textual corpus are still mapping its territory, and this process will continue for some time. As I have mentioned above, most scholarship on the Pāñcarātra to date has paid little or no attention to its internal divisions, and thus to the particular religious identities of the authors of the available works. The study of Pāñcarātriya identities must, of course, be a comparative project. We cannot hope to learn much about the authors or the audience of a particular text by treating that text in isolation. Its methods of classification and its engagement with other texts, the ways in which it locates itself within a tradition, must be compared with the ways in which other texts address these same issues. This way we can form an overall picture, and notice recurrent themes and interesting irregularities. For this reason, it has seemed to me a necessity from the outset that this study must involve as many Pāñcarātra texts as I could reasonably hope to read within the allotted time. Forming an overview of the distinct Pāñcarātra traditions within which the scriptural works were composed and classified seems a more important task at this still relatively early stage in Pāñcarātra studies than undertaking to produce a critical edition of a single Pāñcarātra text. As Colas (2005) has argued, albeit with reference to Vaikhāṇasa works, unless a body of literature has been thoroughly mapped already, a critical edition is reliant upon there being other critical editions of other works in the same corpus. The unsatisfactory state of the current editions of two of the most important Pāñcarātra works, namely the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* and the *Paṇḍarāsaśaṃhitā*, suggests that there is much work to be done before a critical edition of a

representative Pāñcarātra scripture can be fruitfully undertaken.<sup>26</sup> Although I would be hesitant to classify the Pāñcarātra scriptures simply as “ritual manuals”, in the manner that Colas (ibid.) describes the Vaikhānasa texts, I nonetheless share his doubts on the pressing need for an “optimal reading”, based on the study of several manuscripts, of one particular text of this sort. Like the Vaikhānasa works addressed by Colas, the Pāñcarātra scriptures are not literary works whose original form has been for the most part preserved. Rather, they are texts with multiple authors, one of the main purposes of which, as stated above, was to serve as a handbook for the preceptor officiating rituals. For these reasons, and for those related to time, I have not consulted manuscripts for this study.

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<sup>26</sup> As I will have cause to mention again, the current edition of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* is full of corrupt readings and missing portions. Krishnamacharya’s edition of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* is vastly superior to, say, Apte’s *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, but it is based on South Indian manuscripts of a relatively recent date.

## PART ONE

# THE THREE JEWELS AND THE FORMATION OF THE PĀÑCARĀTRA CANON

### *Introduction*

My primary focus in these first three chapters is the idea that there are three Pāñcarātra scriptures which have particular importance in the tradition. By concentrating on the formulations of this idea, I submit, we can learn something both about its origin, and about the different kinds of Pāñcarātrika who made these formulations. In Chapter One I show that this idea appears to have been much less prevalent among Pāñcarātrikas than is commonly supposed by modern Indologists. Indeed, it may well have been the case that certain members of the Pāñcarātra rejected the idea of the supremacy of these three works. As I show in Chapter Two, numerous textual sources attest to the fact that there were distinct groups within the Pāñcarātra from a time quite probably prior to the composition of the earliest extant Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. There is, however, little consistency in the accounts of the different Pāñcarātra groups until around the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The more consistent accounts belong to works composed in South India from this date. Some of these works strongly indicate that there was, during this period, a sectarian animosity between two Pāñcarātra groups in particular, and little agreement among their opposing members as to who had the authority to perform rites in the temple. In Chapter Three, I show that this climate of sectarianism gradually went into decline, possibly starting in the thirteenth century, and that it was replaced by a culture which made concerted attempts to integrate the distinct Pāñcarātra traditions. One of the outcomes of this process was the formation of the Pāñcarātra canon.



## 1. The Three Jewels (*ratnatraya*)

### i.) *The Jayākhyasaṃhitā, the Sātvatasāṃhitā, and the Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*

The *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS), and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS) are assigned by modern scholars to the earliest stratum of extant Pāñcarātra scriptural literature. This earliest stratum has recently been enlarged with the discovery of several Pāñcarātra texts in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts. Four of these as yet unpublished works have been named by Alexis Sanderson (2009: 62ff) as the *Svāyambhuvapañcarātra*, the *Devāmṛtapañcarātra*, the *Vāsudevakalpa* of the *Mahālakṣmīsaṃhitā*, and the *Jayottaratantra*.<sup>27</sup> They are currently being edited for publication by Diwakar Acharya (Acharya 2010). According to both Sanderson (2009, 2009b) and Acharya (2010), each of these recently discovered texts appear to be older than the JS, SS and PauṣS, which Sanderson (2009: 62ff) argues are unlikely to have been written before the middle of the ninth century. Sanderson arrives at this *terminus post quem* on the basis of several factors, the most decisive of which is that the JS and the SS teach the visualisation of a four-faced form of Vāsudeva, called *Vaikuṇṭha* in the JS (6.73c-74) and *Śaktyātman* or *Śaktīśa* in the SS (12.9-19). The earliest surviving stone and bronze sculptures depicting four-faced forms of Viṣṇu (an innovation on earlier three-faced depictions) can be dated to c. 850 CE, and are found almost exclusively in Kashmir (see also Sanderson 2005: 283-84). Moreover, all three Pāñcarātra works, according to Sanderson, incorporate ritual practices and terminology from sources belonging to a mature stage in the development of Saiddhāntika Śaiva ritual (see also Sanderson 2001: 38 n. 50). On the basis of their

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<sup>27</sup> Of these, the *Devāmṛtapañcarātra* is the only title that is unequivocally absent from later canonical lists. A 'Svāyambhuva' is included in the list of Pāñcarātra scriptures contained in the *ādikāṇḍa* (2.1-6) of the *Hayasīrṣapañcarātra*, also known as the *Hayagrīvasaṃhitā*, and in the very similar list contained in the *Agnipurāṇa* 39.1-5; a 'Mahālakṣmī' is named in lists of Pāñcarātra scriptures found in the *Kapīñjala*, *Śrīpuruṣottama*, *Bhāradvāja*, and *Viśvāmitra* Saṃhitās; and a 'Jayottara' is listed in the *Viṣṇutantra*, as well as in the *Kapīñjala*, *Bhāradvāja*, *Pādma* and *Pārameśvara* Saṃhitās, and in Vedāntadeśika's *Pañcarātrarakṣā* (40.3-7), which gives a list parallel to that found in the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (at 10.376c-382b).

more “sophisticated” language and the fact that they have better assimilated material from Śaiva sources, Sanderson (2009: 68-9) believes that the SS and the PauṣS are probably the latest of the “early” Pāñcarātra works.

The conclusions arrived at by Sanderson with regard to the dating of our earliest Pāñcarātra scriptures represent a significant departure from previous scholarship on this subject which, as recently as 1994, favoured the much earlier date of c. 500 CE for the composition of the JS, SS and PauṣS (Matsubara 1994: 34). The allocation of this earlier date was largely based on the assumption that the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, which itself refers to the JS and the SS, was known to the Kashmirian author Bhagavadutpala – an assumption which Sanderson (2001: 35-8) convincingly argues is unwarranted. With regard to the provenance of the earliest works, Schrader (1916), Matsubara (1994), and Sanderson (2009, 2009b) agree upon a Kashmirian origin, while K. V. Soundara Rajan (1981), in a useful study of the JS’s 20<sup>th</sup> *paṭala*, argues that this chapter displays a knowledge of both Northern and Southern temple styles, and that the JS as a whole can therefore be assigned to Central India or the Upper Deccan, where both architectural forms were in concurrent use from an early period.

As I will demonstrate in later chapters, the present versions of the JS, SS and PauṣS all contain material which appears to have been interpolated in South India. In light of this, assigning these texts *en bloc* to one particular geographic region, or to one particular historical period, especially on the basis of a single, isolated passage or chapter, is surely a mistake. These are clearly not homogeneous, singly authored works, and it is hardly possible to retrieve the “original” Saṃhitās from the versions which have come down to us. Discrete passages and sometimes whole chapters have been added to these texts, and we must assume that the redactors responsible for these additions have also, on occasion, deleted passages from the older layers. Such a scenario would at least help to explain why the present versions of the SS and the PauṣS, in particular, contain large sections which appear to be so arbitrarily structured, and are so evidently incomplete.<sup>28</sup>

Owing to the heterogeneous authorship of these works, then, it is very difficult to establish a *terminus ad quem* for their composition. That both the JS and the SS are

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<sup>28</sup> On the SS’s structure, and its likely added and missing portions, see especially Smith (1975: 534-35).

named as well as quoted by the Kashmirian author Bhagavadutpala tells us, at any rate, that these texts existed in Kashmir in some form during his lifetime. Although Bhagavadutpala's dates are themselves far from certain, he is unlikely to have written his *Spandapradīpikā* (SpPr) before the middle of the tenth century, the period assigned to him by Dyczkowski (1994: 29). Bhagavadutpala quotes from the JS, which he also calls *Śrījayā* (SpPr 12.2) and simply *Jayā* (SpPr 35.24, 56.16), on four occasions, and in each instance the verses are found in the present edition of this text. We can be sure, then, that the older parts of the extant JS were composed before c. 950 CE, while the presumably youngest section of this text, as we will see below, was added during the second half of the fourteenth century. Meanwhile, the SS, or the *Śrīsātvatā* (SpPr 21.22) is quoted once by Bhagavadutpala, though only the first of the two *śloka*s quoted is found in the present version of the SS (at 18.128). As I will argue below, it is my opinion that the final two chapters (the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>) of this work are a later addition to the text, though it is very difficult to say when this interpolation may have occurred. My own estimate is that it was not very late, and that if it can be shown to have taken place in South India, then it was very likely before the career of Rāmānuja, in other words before c. 1125 CE.<sup>29</sup>

While it is possible that the PauṣS is also quoted by Bhagavadutpala (SpPr 3.17: *śrīpauṣkarāyāṃ hy uktam...*), it cannot be stated for certain that this *śrīpauṣkarā* refers to our text. Dyczkowski (1994: 295), however, favours this interpretation over that which puts forward the *Pauṣkarāgama*, a Śaiva work. The quoted verse is not found in the (incomplete) present versions of either text. Of the three works addressed here, i.e. the JS, SS and PauṣS, the PauṣS appears to contain the largest amount of interpolated material. Owing to the poor and incomplete state of the extant PauṣS, as reflected in Apte's two-part (1991, 2006) Critical Edition, there has been very little serious scholarship on this work, and no sustained attempt to analyse and compare its heterogeneous contents.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, unless new manuscripts of the PauṣS come to

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<sup>29</sup> The traditional date of Rāmānuja's death, 1137 CE, is now widely regarded - see Carman (1974: 27) and Young (2007: 236) - as 30 or 40 years too early.

<sup>30</sup> This is in contrast to the JS and the SS which, in recent years, have been the subject of, respectively, a detailed study by Rastelli (1999), and a partial translation by Hikita. Hikita has published separately his annotated translations of certain chapters of the SS, and several of these can be found in my bibliography.



light, it seems unlikely that such a project could be fruitfully undertaken at any time in the near future.<sup>31</sup> In the absence of such a text-critical study, it makes little sense in my opinion to assign the present version of the PauṣS to an early date and a North Indian provenance for, as we will see in subsequent chapters, there are several clues that significant sections of it were composed in South India at a later date.

## ii.) *The three jewels*

General introductions to the Pāñcarātra literature commonly emphasise the exalted status of the JS, SS and PauṣS as the so-called “three jewels” (*ratnatraya*) of the scriptural corpus.<sup>32</sup> However, despite its ubiquity in oral traditions and in the secondary Indological literature, the claim that these three works are supreme in the Pāñcarātra canon is itself contained in only four of the 35 published Saṃhitās, namely the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā*, and a late, interpolated section of the JS entitled *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*. Further, as we will see below, only the latter among these works actually refers to the JS, SS and PauṣS as the “three jewels”. Before proceeding to discuss ideas of textual hierarchy and canon in the Pāñcarātra literature in general, I will offer in this chapter a brief synopsis of the relevant passages from these four texts.

Among these, the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (PārS) is likely the earliest.<sup>33</sup> Rastelli (2006: 54, 98) cautiously assigns the composition of this work to the period 1100-1300 CE, favouring the earlier half of this time frame on account of the social and political upheavals which affected Śrīraṅgam, the PārS’s likely place of origin, throughout the thirteenth century. She also highlights the derivative nature of the text. The PārS incorporates passages from the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*, the

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<sup>31</sup> That is, given that research on the Pāñcarātra in general is still relatively young. There are many better preserved works among the published Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, and most of these have not yet been studied in any detail.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. Smith (1972: 43), Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 27), Hikita (2005: 167), Colas (2009: 155).

<sup>33</sup> For a chronology of these works see Matsubara (1994: 29-30) and Rastelli (2006: 52-4).

*Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, and the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS)<sup>34</sup> among others, and its author, or “compiler” as Rastelli proposes, clearly also had a close knowledge of each of the “three jewels”. Rastelli (2002: 9) writes: “[The] compiler of the PārS turns to all three of these Saṃhitās with each topic that is also dealt with in one or more of these texts and incorporates in some cases very long passages from them. Some chapters of the PārS consist almost entirely of passages adopted from these three texts.” While there are several apparently earlier Saṃhitās which reveal a close knowledge of one or other of the JS, SS and PauṣS, it would appear that the PārS is one of the earliest extant Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās to display a close knowledge of all three texts.

In the PārS’s opening chapter (*adhyāya*) the SS, PauṣS and JS are listed together and are said to confer both liberation and “enjoyments” (*bhoga*). This is in contradistinction to the “first teaching” (*prathamam śāstram*), called here the “secret tradition” (*rahasyāmnāya*), which grants liberation only.<sup>35</sup> We are told elsewhere in the first chapter that the three Saṃhitās were revealed for the benefit of those who had, from the time of the Tretā Age (*yuga*), given up the “supreme *dharma*” (i.e. the secret tradition), which refers only to Vāsudeva, and replaced it with a “mixed *dharma*” (*miśradharma*), which refers to other deities and fulfills other desires (*kāma*).<sup>36</sup> In the present age these people “long again for that abode [of Vāsudeva]”, and so the three Saṃhitās are revealed, which are accessible to members of each social class (*varṇa*), and which combine a concern with worldly enjoyments (*bhoga*) as contained in the “mixed *dharma*” with the Vāsudeva-oriented soteriology of the “supreme *dharma*”.<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere in the PārS, this supreme *dharma* or “secret tradition” is also variously

<sup>34</sup> Although the PārS is included in the canonical list of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās contained in the PādS (*jp* 1.105b), this list is a late interpolation, and the PārS is likely the later text. See Rastelli (2006: 58-9).

<sup>35</sup> PārS 1.16c-19b: *śrutvaivaṃ prathamam śāstram rahasyāmnāyasaṃjñitam // divyamantrakramopetaṃ mokṣaikaṃ phalalakṣaṇam / bhūyaḥ saṃcoditāt tasmāt tena lokahitaiṣiṇā // śrutam vistarataḥ śāstram bhogamokṣapradam hi yat / anuṣṭupchandobaddhena proktaṃ bhagavatā svayam // sātvatam pauṣkaram caiva jayākhyety evamādikam /*

<sup>36</sup> In other words, desires for enjoyments (*bhoga*) rather than for liberation. See PārS 1.75bcd: *tatas tretāyugādiṣu / vikāavedāḥ sarvatra devāntaragocarāḥ //*; 1.79: *tatas tretāyuge sarve nānākāmasamanvitāḥ / vyāmiśrayājino bhūtvā tyajyanty ādyaṃ sanātanam //*; and 1.87 (see next note). The “changed Vedas” (*vikāavedāḥ*) at 1.75c are to be understood as the same as the “mixed *dharma*” that is mentioned at 1.87b.

<sup>37</sup> In addition to the verses in the previous note, see especially PārS 1.87-89: *parityajya param dharmaṃ miśradharmam upeyuṣām / bhūyas tatpadakāṅkṣāṇām śraddhābhakti upeyuṣām // anugrahārtham varṇāṇām yogyatāpādanāya ca / tathā janānām sarveṣām abhīṣṭaphalasiddhaye // sātvatādīni śāstrāṇi bhogamokṣapradāni ca / upadiśya tu divyāni śāstrāṇi tadanantaram //*

called the “root-Veda” or the “original Veda” (*mūlaveda*, e.g. PārS 1.64b, 10.212c; *mūlaśruti*, PārS 1.63a), the foremost Bhāgavata *dharma* (PārS 1.78a), the *dharma* of the Ekāntins (*ekāntidharma*, PārS 1.60a), the original *dharma* (*prakṛtidharma*, PārS 1.41a, 74c), and the Ekāyanaveda (e.g. PārS 1.32c, 56c).

The SS, PauṣS and JS are also mentioned together at PārS 10.376cd, this time in the context of a classification of Pāñcarātra scriptures into three distinct groups, namely the celestial teachings (*divyaśāstra*), the teachings of sages (*munibhāṣitaśāstra*), and the teachings of men (*pauruṣaśāstra*).<sup>38</sup> Although this classification is already present in the SS,<sup>39</sup> a text which was known to the author/compiler of the PārS, the theory that the SS, PauṣS and JS alone among Pāñcarātra scriptures represent the *direct* revelation of God (*divyaśāstra*) is, as far as we can tell, here expressed for the first time.<sup>40</sup> I will discuss this passage in detail below.

The author of the PārS directly relates his own text to this original revelation by claiming that it contains within itself the elucidation of the meaning of the PauṣS. Explaining the transmission of the teaching, Śāṇḍilya, the narrator of the PārS, says:

*pārameśvaraśāstrāṇām sarveśām munipuṅgava / sārabhūtaṃ viśeṣeṇa  
pauṣkarārthopapādakam // mūlavedānusāreṇa chandasānuṣṭubhena ca /  
lakṣagranthena sarvārthakriyājñānopalabdhye // sa me 'bravīn mahāśāstraṃ  
pārameśvarasaṃjñayā //* – “So as [for me] to attain knowledge, and the accomplishment of all [my] objectives, he [Saṃkarṣaṇa] related to me the great teaching called Pārameśvara, which is in accordance with the root-Veda (*mūlaveda*), has *anuṣṭubh* as its metre, consists [originally] of one *lakh* of verses, which is, O best of sages, the true essence of all the teachings relating to the highest Lord (*pārameśvaraśāstrāṇām*), and which presents in particular the meaning of the Pauṣkara [Saṃhitā].” (PārS 1.90-92b)

The *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS) also contains substantial derivative portions, incorporating numerous passages from the SS (see Bock-Raming 2002: 352ff), and

<sup>38</sup> For this classification see especially PārS 10.336-345, and the parallel verses at ĪS 1.54-63.

<sup>39</sup> SS 22.52c-59b. Several of these verses, as Rastelli (2006: 108 n. 202) has shown, are included within a section of the tenth chapter of the PārS (10.347-374b). This whole section of the PārS is also included in the ĪS (23.4-31b).

<sup>40</sup> See PārS 10.376c-377b: *sātvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyam ca tathaiva ca // evamādīni śāstrāṇi divyānī avadhāraya /*. It should be pointed out that Rastelli (2006: 111ff) offers a different reading of the passage containing these verses. See my discussion “The Formation of the Pāñcarātra Canon” below.

also borrowing liberally from the PārS. Like the PārS, this text is included in the canonical list of scriptures found in the PādS (*jp* 1.103d), but the ĪS is certainly the later text, probably not composed before the late thirteenth or fourteenth century (Matsubara 1994: 28-31). Numerous passages in the first chapter of the ĪS, a short history of the “descent” or genealogy of the Pāñcarātra scriptures (*śāstrāvatarāṇa*), contain material which is apparently drawn directly from the PārS.<sup>41</sup> The author refers to the three texts SS, PauṣS and JS again as the celestial (*divya*) teachings, which are proclaimed by Hari in the *anuṣṭubh* metre, and are “in accordance with the root-Veda”.<sup>42</sup> A few lines later the text partially repeats itself with a verse, the first part of which is the same as PārS 10.376c-377b:

*sātvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyam ca tathaiva ca // evamādīni divyāni śāstrāṇi hariṇā svayam / mūlavedānusāreṇa proktāni hitakāmyayā //* – “Such celestial teachings as the Sātvata, Pauṣkara and Jayākhyā were taught by [the Lord] Hari himself, in accordance with the root-Veda, for the sake of the well-being of others.” (ĪS 64c-65)

The ĪS goes on to liken the position of the three texts within the broader literature to that of three mantras – the eight-syllabled (*aṣṭākṣara*), the twelve-syllabled (*dvādaśākṣara*) and the six-syllabled (*ṣaḍākṣara*)<sup>43</sup> - among all the mantras of Viṣṇu: “And this triad Sātvata etc. is pervasive, O best of sages, as is the triad of mantras *aṣṭākṣara* etc., O learned ones.”<sup>44</sup> How are we to understand the term *vyāpaka*

<sup>41</sup> Parallel verses, containing a few minor changes, between the first chapter of the ĪS and the PārS: ĪS 1.1 ← PārS 1.1; ĪS 1.2cd ← PārS 1.3cd; ĪS 1.3ab ← PārS 1.4cd; ĪS 1.12ab ← PārS 1.25cd; ĪS 1.16ab ← PārS 1.32ab; ĪS 1.19 ← PārS 1.57c-58b; ĪS 1.20-21 ← PārS 1.33-34; ĪS 1.22c-28 ← PārS 1.74c-80; ĪS 1.29c-35b ← PārS 1.59-64; ĪS 1.36b-38a ← PārS 1.65b-67a; ĪS 1.39b-40c ← PārS 1.54c-56a; ĪS 1.41-42 ← PārS 1.72c-74b; ĪS 1.43 ← PārS 1.56c-57b; ĪS 1.45c-47a ← PārS 1.84c-86a; ĪS 1.48-49 ← PārS 1.87-88; ĪS 1.50ab ← PārS 1.91ab; ĪS 1.50cd ← PārS 1.19ab; ĪS 1.54-63 ← PārS 10.336-345; ĪS 1.64c-65a ← PārS 10.376c-377a; ĪS 1.70ab ← PārS 1.90cd.

<sup>42</sup> ĪS 1.50-51a: *mūlavedānusāreṇa chandasānuṣṭubhena ca / sātvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyety evamādīkam // divyaṃ sacchāstrajālaṃ...*

<sup>43</sup> These are, respectively, OM NAMO NĀRĀYAṆĀYA, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VĀSUDEVĀYA, and OM VIṢṆAVE NAMAḤ.

<sup>44</sup> ĪS 1.66: *sātvatādyam trikaṃ caitat vyāpakaṃ munisattamāḥ / yathā cāṣṭākṣarādīnām mantrāṇām tritayam budhāḥ //* Rastelli’s (1999a: 71) translation of this verse into German reads: “Und diese Dreiheit Sātvata usw. ist umfassend, ihr besten Weisen, wie die Dreiheit (d.h. die Silbe om) für Mantras wie den Aṣṭākṣara[mantra] und die anderen, ihr Weisen.” This reading might be justified with recourse to a passage in the SS (9.37-41b) in which the *bīja* and *piṇḍa* portions of a mantra are called “pervading” (*vyāpaka*) in distinction to the *saṃjñā* and *pada* portions which are “pervaded” (*vyāpya*). However, elsewhere in the ĪS the *aṣṭākṣara* is named as one of three mantras which are themselves

in this context? In what sense are the three aforementioned mantras *vyāpaka* in their context? Elsewhere in the ĪS we are provided with an explanation:

*sādhāraṇās tv ime mantrās trayaḥ sarvāsu mūrtiṣu // anye tu manavas tattanmūrtimātraparā hy ataḥ / vyāpakatritayenārcyāḥ sarvā apī ca mūrtayaḥ // mantrair anyais tu sampūjyās tattanmūrtaya eva hi / tasmāt sarveṣu mantreṣu vyāpakatritayaṃ varam //* – “These three mantras are applicable in [the worship of] all [divine] manifestations, while other formulas are only applicable to this or that particular manifestation. Indeed, all [divine] manifestations can be worshipped with the triad of pervasive [mantras], while particular [individual] manifestations are [also] worshipped with other mantras. Therefore, among all mantras the triad of pervasive [ones] is superior.” (ĪS 23.53c-55b)

According to the author of this passage, then, the superiority of the “pervasive” or “comprehensive” mantras rests on their general applicability in Pāñcarātra worship. This is in contrast to other mantras, which are applicable only in the worship of “this or that” (*tattat*) particular divine manifestation. By describing the SS, PauṣS and JS as “pervasive” in the manner of these mantras, the author is therefore expressing the idea that these three “celestial” scriptures have a *general* applicability in any context of Pāñcarātra worship, and this is to be understood alongside the concomitant idea that the applicability of other scriptures is limited to their own *specific* contexts. “Context” here refers primarily to the temple in which a particular scripture is in use. When the author then admits that the SS, PauṣS and JS are linked with, respectively, Yādavācala (Melkote), Śrīraṅgam and Hastiśaila (Kāñcīpuram),<sup>45</sup> he is able to provide this information having already established the fact that their use is not limited to these places.

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called “pervasive” (*vyāpaka*): *sarveṣu viṣṇumantreṣu mantrāḥ syur vyāpakās trayaḥ / ādyaṃ nārāyaṇāṣṭārṇaṃ dvitīyaṃ dvādaśākṣaram // vāsudevasya yogīndrās tato viṣṇuṣaḍakṣaram /* – “Among all the mantras of Viṣṇu, there are three pervasive mantras. The first has eight syllables and is of Nārāyaṇa, the second has twelve syllables and is of Vāsudeva, and then, most excellent Yogins, there is the six syllabled [mantra] of Viṣṇu” (ĪS 23.52-53b). We are subsequently told: *triṣv apy eṣu vyāpakeṣu mantro hy aṣṭākṣaro ’dhikaḥ /* – “Indeed, among these three pervasive [ones], the *aṣṭākṣara* mantra is superior” (ĪS 23.56ab). These three mantras are also considered together in the *Lakṣmītantra* at 24.68ff, where they are said to constitute three of the five *vyāpaka* mantras in the Pāñcarātra (74cd).

<sup>45</sup> ĪS 1.67: *etat tantratrayoktena vidhinā yādavācale / śrīraṅge hastiśaile ca kramāt sampūjyate hariḥ //* The later *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* section of the JS (12c-13b) also associates these texts with these places: *sāttvataṃ yaduśailendre śrīraṅge pauṣkaram tathā // hastiśaile jayākhyam ca sāmrajyam adhiṣṭhāti /*

We also find in the ĪS (1.54-63) the same passage classifying Pāñcarātra scriptures into three groups (*divya*, *munibhāṣita*, and *pauruṣa*) that is contained in the PārS (10.336-345), as well as the device of appending itself to one of the three jewels, in this case the SS, the meaning of which the ĪS (25.213b) claims to be “illuminating” (*prakāśikā*). In a passage which is similar to the aforementioned PārS 1.90, Nārada explains to the sages gathered at the Badarī hermitage:

*atas sākṣād īśvaroktaśāstrāṇāṃ dvijapuṅgavāḥ // sārabhūtaṃ viśeṣeṇa  
sātvatārthopapādakam / īśvarākhyam idaṃ tantraṃ sākṣāt saṅkarṣaṇāc chrutam  
// sampravakṣyāmi... //*. – “Therefore, O best among the twice-born, I will enunciate this tantra called Īśvara, heard directly from Saṅkarṣaṇa, which is the true essence of the teachings which are directly revealed by God, and which presents in particular the meaning of the Sātvata [Saṃhitā].” (ĪS 1.69c-71a)

A ‘Śrīpraśna’ is also mentioned in the canonical list of the PādS (*jp* 1.101a) but, like both the PārS and the ĪS, the *Śrīpraśnasamhitā* (ŚrīprśS) is almost certainly later than the bulk of this text. The chronology proposed by Raghavan (1969) places it as roughly contemporary with the ĪS, with the ŚrīprśS likely to be the later of the two works. Like both the PārS and the ĪS, the ŚrīprśS contains substantial derivative portions. It reproduces a significant number of verses verbatim from the ‘Kriyāpāda’ section of the PādS, and also shares parallel verses with the SS and the ĪS (Padmanabhan 1969). In a similar manner to the PārS and the ĪS, the ŚrīprśS refers to the SS, PauṣS and JS as the celestial (*divya*) scriptures in a passage which contains strong echoes of PārS 1.77 and ĪS 1.25,<sup>46</sup> and which also refers to an original Pāñcarātra teaching (*śāstra*) called the “root-Veda” (*mūlaveda*):

*jaganmūlaṃ vāsudevaṃ mukhyataḥ pratyapādayat // tac chāstraṃ mūla-  
vedākhyam ity api procyate budhaiḥ / adhyetr̥bhedaṃ āśritya śāstram etat  
tridhā rame // sāttvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyam ca bhaviṣyati / athaitāḥ  
saṃhitā divyāḥ vadiṣyanti vipaścitaḥ //*. – “The teaching is designated with the name *mūlaveda* by the learned because it primarily expounded upon Vāsudeva [who is] the root of the world. Owing to there being differences among students, I delight [in the fact that] this teaching will become threefold: Sāttvata, Pauṣkara

<sup>46</sup> PārS 1.77: *jaganmūlasya devasya vāsudevasya mukhyataḥ / pratipādakatā siddhā mūlavedākhyatā dvija //*; ĪS 1.25: *jaganmūlasya vedasya vāsudevasya mukhyataḥ / pratipādakatā siddhā mūlavedākhyatā dvijāḥ //*.

and Jayākhyā. Thus the learned will say these Saṃhitās are celestial.” (ŚrīprśS 49.471c-473)

These verses articulate a rather different understanding, then, of the relation between the three celestial Saṃhitās and the original teaching. Where the PārS (1.87-89) and the ĪS (1.47-51) present the JS, SS and PauṣS as combining the soteriology of the root-Veda with the granting of enjoyments (*bhoga*) as found in the “mixed *dharma*”, and as having been revealed by god for the benefit of those who had abandoned the former in favour of the latter, in this passage the ŚrīprśS presents the three celestial Saṃhitās as themselves distinct manifestations of the root-Veda.

The section of the JS entitled *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* (literally “additional text”) consists of 163 *śloka*s, which have been interpolated between the JS’s first and second chapters. The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* offers the most substantial account of the “three jewels” theory, as well as an interesting and unique interpretation as to how the three texts relate to one another. The narrator explains:

*pañcarātrasya kṛtsnasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam*<sup>47</sup> / *iti sarvatra vikhyātaṃ bhagavacchāstragauravam* // *sāttvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyam* *tantram uttamam* / *ratnatrayam iti khyātaṃ tadviśeṣa ihocyate* // *sāraṃ sāttvataśāstrasya rahasyam prājñasaṃmatam* / *ratnatrayam idaṃ sākṣād bhagavadvaktraniḥśṛtam* // *pravartitaṃ tathaivedam anyūnādhikatvataḥ* / *anyānyāni tu tantrāṇi bhagavanmukhanirgatam* // *sāraṃ samupajīvyaiḥ samāsavyāsadhāraṇaiḥ* / *vyākhyopabṛmhaṇanyāyād vyāpitāni tathā tathā* // *vyākhyāmūlanayenaiṣāṃ gauravaṃ sampratiṣṭhitam* / . – “Nārāyaṇa himself is the proclaimer of the whole of the Pañcarātra. The venerability of the teaching of the Bhagavat is thus known everywhere. The Sāttvata, Pauṣkara and Jayākhyā are [collectively] the highest Tantra, called the “three jewels”. Its particularity is explained here. The essence of the Sāttvata teaching is a secret that is honoured by sages. This triad of jewels has come forth directly from the mouth of the Bhagavat, so indeed this [triad] is established as neither deficient nor excessive. After the tantras established themselves [out of] the essence emanating from the mouth of the Bhagavat, they supplemented (*vyāpitāni*, literally “pervaded”) one another with a commentary (or “explanation”, *vyākhyā*), [that is] based upon a

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Mahābhārata* (MBh) 12.337.63ab: *pañcarātrasya kṛtsnasya vettā tu bhagavān svayam* / . In his *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (128.4), Yāmuna quotes this verse (“Thus it is taught in the *Mahābhārata*...”, *paṭhyate bhārata tathā*) but in the version which is found in the main text above, i.e. in the opening verse of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*: *pañcarātrasya kṛtsnasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam*. It is later quoted by Rāmānuja, alongside other passages from the MBh, in his *Śrībhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.2.42 (334.1) and, later still, by Madhva in his commentary on the MBh, the *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya* (2.101ab). The *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* contains the verse at 43.9-10. Each of these works predates the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* (for the dating of which see below).

principle of strengthening [the “essence” or “root text”], and in such a way [these tantras can be characterised] by their possessing both brevity [i.e. in the form of the root text], and detail [in the form of the commentary]. Indeed the venerability of these [texts] is established on the grounds of [this combination of] commentary and root [text].” (JS *ap* 1-6b)

As far as I am aware, this is the only passage in any extant Pāñcarātra text in which the relationship between the “three jewels” is characterised in this way. As we have seen above, the PārS, ĪS and ŚrīprśS all indicate the common origin of the JS, SS and PauṣS in their references to a “root-Veda”, or an “original Veda” (*mūlaveda*). That which distinguishes the above account, however, is the idea that the three texts remain interdependent even after they have emerged from the same source (here simply “essence”, *sāra*), and that each of them supplements the other in the manner of root text and commentary. Rastelli (1999: 54) explains their relation in this context thus: “Jede Saṃhitā beinhaltet einen Teil der von Gott verkündeten Lehre, und zwar in der Weise, dass eine die andere ergänzt bzw. eine den Stoff ausführlicher erklärt, welcher in einer anderen nur kurz angerissen wird” (“Each Saṃhitā contains a part of God’s teaching in such a way that one completes the other. Where one explains some material in detail, in the other it will be described only briefly”). In other words, none of these texts can be fully understood except when read in tandem with the others, since the three taken together constitute a single teaching (*śāstra*). The narrator himself explains this a few lines later:

*mūlavyākhyānarūpatvād upajīvyam parasparam // tantratrayam idaṃ vidyād ekaśāstram tathā budhaḥ* 1. – “Owing to the form of root [text] and commentary, the three Tantras are mutually supportive, so the learned should know that this [threefold Tantra] is a single teaching.” (JS *ap* 11c-12b)

The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* is also unique among the aforementioned Pāñcarātra works in that it is the only one which actually contains the term *ratnatraya*. The prevalence of this term in the secondary Indological literature therefore far outweighs its presence in the Pāñcarātra scriptures themselves, where it occurs only in this late, interpolated section of the JS. In fact, to my knowledge, the only other extant Sanskrit text of this period which contains the term in reference to Pāñcarātra scriptures is the



*Pāñcarātrarakṣā* (PRR) of Veṅkaṭanātha - hereafter referred to as ‘Vedāntadeśika’, the honorific by which he is now more commonly known. Vedāntadeśika belonged, at that time, to the Śrīvaiṣṇava community at Śrīraṅgam. In the PRR, as in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, the renowned (*prasiddha*) scriptures called the “three jewels” are characterised by their having come forth directly from the mouth of God.<sup>48</sup>

The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* and the PRR, the only two extant works which employ this term *ratnatraya* to describe Pāñcarātra scriptures, were in all likelihood both written during the fourteenth century, the former in Kāñcīpuram and the latter in Śrīraṅgam. The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* was written, at least partly, to eulogise the Varadarājasvāmin temple in Kāñcī (referred to as *Hastisaila* throughout). The general date of its composition is provided by Rajan (1981: 27), whose fourteenth century estimate is based on the correlation of architectural descriptions contained in the text with historical data concerning the construction of the temple building. Meanwhile, although the PRR is likely to have been written during its author’s first stint as an *ācārya* at Śrīraṅgam,<sup>49</sup> Vedāntadeśika (whose traditional dates are 1268-1369) did spend his formative years in Kāñcīpuram, and his writings exerted considerable influence in this city during his lifetime as well as after his death (Raman 1975: 70ff, Hopkins 2002).<sup>50</sup> It is not therefore wholly implausible to suggest that the author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* might have been familiar with the PRR.<sup>51</sup> At any rate, if Rajan is correct in identifying the *gopura* described in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* with one added to the Varadarājasvāmin temple during the Vijayanagar period, it is fairly safe to assume that this interpolated section of the JS was composed during the second half of the

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<sup>48</sup> PRR 47.6-7: *yathoktaṃ sākṣād bhagavanmukhodgatatayā ratnatrayam iti prasiddheṣu jayākhyasāttvatapauṣkareṣu...*

<sup>49</sup> In other words, during the period before the second sack of Śrīraṅgam by Muslim forces in 1323. See Singh (1958: 100), and Hari Rao (1976: 116-17).

<sup>50</sup> Vedāntadeśika wrote a *stotra*, the *Varadarājapañcāśat*, in praise of Lord Varadarāja at Kāñcī, and was intimately connected with this temple in his early years.

<sup>51</sup> Of course this does not enable us to conclude that the author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* directly borrowed from the PRR, for (an)other text/s no longer available to us may also have characterised the JS, SS and Pauṣ as *ratnatraya*. However, the influence of the teachings of *Viśiṣṭādvaitavedānta* are clearly discernible in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* (see, for example, JS *ap* 109), and Vedāntadeśika was a very important figure in that *milieu* during this period.

fourteenth century, during the 1360s at the very earliest,<sup>52</sup> and is therefore almost certainly later than the PRR.

This would mean of course that the composition of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* was also subsequent to that of the PārS and the ĪS. That the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* contains the claim, found in both the PārS and the ĪS, that these two texts serve to elucidate, respectively, the PauṣS and the SS, further bears witness to its later composition. The author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* tells us:

*tantra 'py aṣṭottaraśate parameśvarasaṃhitā // pauṣkarārthavivṛtyarthā  
vyākhyārūpā 'vatāritā / sāttvatasya vivṛtyartham īśvaraṃ tantram uttamam //  
jayākhyasyāsa tantrasya vyākhyānaṃ pādmam ucyate /* – “Also, among the 108  
tantras, the *Parameśvarasaṃhitā* was transmitted (*avatāritā*, literally “brought  
down”) in the form of a commentary (*vyākhyā*), [whose] purpose is the  
explanation of the meaning of the Pauṣkara [Saṃhitā]. The Īśvara [Saṃhitā] is the  
highest tantra [whose] purpose is the explanation of the Sāttvata [Saṃhitā]. The  
commentary on the Jayākhyā Tantra is called the Pādma [Saṃhitā].” (JS *ap* 6c-  
8b)

Whilst the PārS and the ĪS, as we have established, themselves claim association with, respectively, the PauṣS and the SS, the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS) does not link itself to the JS in the manner described above. Indeed, it is tempting to conclude that this single verse in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* has provided the basis for the claim, which has been perpetuated in a number of modern exegetical and scholarly works (e.g. Padmanabhan 1974: 29, Varadachari 1982: 287, Colas 2009: 155), that the PādS is “based on” or “derived from” the JS. This explanation appeals because although the ‘Jñānapāda’ section of the PādS appears to have incorporated several passages from the fourth chapter of the JS (Rastelli 1999a), in general the PādS owes little to the earlier work, and contains a wealth of information, especially on the subject of the construction of temples, which is wholly absent from the JS. It is indicative, indeed, that the JS’s 20<sup>th</sup> *paṭala*, wherein the majority of this work’s architectural detail is to

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<sup>52</sup> According to K.V. Raman (1975: 26) Kāñcī did not come under Vijayanagar dominance until the 1360s. The outer, western *gopura* of the Varadarājasvāmin temple (i.e. that which Rajan identifies as being described in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*) is likely to have been built following Vijayanagar leader Kumāra Kampana’s arrival in the city, sometime during, or shortly after, 1361. The earliest dateable inscription found on the plinth portion of the *gopura* belongs to Kampana and is dated 1374. On this see Raman (ibid: 54).

be found, shares no significant data with the PādS, and describes a style of temple which is not referred to by the latter (see Rajan 1981). It is worth mentioning, in addition, that the status of the PādS as a “commentary” on the JS does not appear to have been accepted always by the traditions which have inherited and used these texts. For the nineteenth century Śrīvaiṣṇava author Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa writes in his commentary on the ĪS, the *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā* (SāPr), that in fact it is the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT) that is the commentary (*vr̥tti*) on the JS, and that the PādS is only consulted by the priests of the Hastiśailanātha (i.e. Vāradarājasvāmin) temple on those subjects (specifically “festivals etc.”) which the LT does not cover.<sup>53</sup>

In the context of the three jewels the PādS is important for its presentation of an alternative scriptural hierarchy, not found elsewhere in the extant literature. At the very end of this long text, we encounter the claim that there are “five jewels”, and these do not include the JS, SS or PauṣS:

*tantrāṇāṃ caiva ratnāni pañcāhuḥ paramarṣayaḥ / pādmaṃ sanatkumāraṃ ca tathā paramasaṃhitā // padmodbhavaṃ ca mādendraṃ kaṇva tantrāmṛtāni ca /* – “Eminent sages name five jewels among the tantras: Pādma, Sanatkumāra, Paramasaṃhitā, Padmodbhava and Mādendra are the immortal tantras O Kaṇva.” (PādS cp 33.204-205b)

We are faced here, at least ostensibly, with a somewhat puzzling situation. Whilst the author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* tells us that the PādS is a commentary on the JS, and is in use in the same temple in Kāñcīpuram as that text,<sup>54</sup> the PādS itself does not include the JS in its list of “five jewels”, those scriptures which, we can presumably infer, the author of the above passage considered superior within his tradition. Leaving aside for the moment the question of why the author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* might have made this claim on behalf of the PādS (I will discuss this question below), we must first attempt to explain why the JS is not included in this list.

<sup>53</sup> SāPr on ĪS 1.64-67: *idaṃ sātvaṭapauṣkaraḥ jayākhyatantratrāyaṃ... īśvara pārameśvara lakṣmī-tantrākhyatantratrāyaṃ krameṇa teṣāṃ vr̥ttirūpam / tatreśvara pārameśvara yor utsavādīnāṃ pauṣkalyam asti / lakṣmītantrē tu tan nāsti / ataḥ ‘anuktaṃ anyato grāhyam’ ity uktarītyā hastiśailanāthārcakair padmuktānām utsavādyācārāṇāṃ parigrahaḥ kṛta iti... /*

<sup>54</sup> On the JS’s and the PādS’s association with Kāñcī see JS ap 13-14b: *hastiśaile jayākhyam ca sāmrajyam adhitiṣṭhati / pādmatantram hastiśaile... // ... kāryakāri pracāryate /*. On the JS’s association with Kāñcī at the time of the composition of the ĪS, see ĪS 1.67.

There are, on the face of it, at least two possible explanations for its omission. The first is simply that the composition of this portion of the PādS was complete before the idea of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS became current.<sup>55</sup> Given that it appears quite probable that the PārS (the earliest extant text to list the JS, SS and PauṣS as the “celestial” scriptures) incorporated passages from the PādS and is therefore later than the bulk of that text, it is certainly a possibility that the composition of this section of the PādS predated the idea of the superiority of the three aforementioned scriptures. However, we can be certain that the PādS’s list of canonical scriptures (at *jp* 1.99-114) was added to the main body of the text at a much later date (as can be inferred from the inclusion within the list of demonstrably later scriptures such as the ĪS and the ŚrīprśS), and this shows that additions were still being made to the PādS at a time when the theory of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS was already quite well established. Indeed, the fact that its list of “five jewels” occurs at the very end of the PādS might well suggest that this passage is itself a later addition.

The second possible explanation is that the author of the passage in question in the PādS belonged to a tradition within the Pāñcarātra which did not at that time accept the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS. The fact that the PādS describes *itself* as “celestial” (*divyam*) at the beginning of the second chapter (*jp* 2.3a) is perhaps worthy of note, though it was quite common for authors to present their texts in such terms, regardless of the tradition they belonged to. Be that as it may, the theory that the PādS did originate from a tradition within the Pāñcarātra which was distinct from the tradition to which at least the PārS and the ĪS belonged is a compelling one, and it is the subject of distinct traditions within the Pāñcarātra to which I shall turn next.

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<sup>55</sup> As is the case with much of the anonymous Pāñcarātra literature, the PādS is certainly not a homogeneous, singly authored work, and so it is difficult to establish its date and provenance. Rastelli (2003) claims that its date can be determined only in relation to other Saṃhitās, and places the bulk of its composition between that of the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS), from which it borrows, and that of the PārS. Her suggestion that it is subsequent to the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (AS) as well as to the lifetime of Rāmānuja would most likely place it towards the end of the twelfth century, or shortly thereafter.

### iii.) Conclusions

The JS, SS and PauṣS appear to be the oldest of the published Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, though I will argue below that each of these works most likely achieved their present form at a later date in South India. With the recent discovery of several early Pāñcarātra works in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, we can be fairly certain, at any rate, that the JS, SS and PauṣS were not the earliest Pāñcarātra scriptures. Indeed, it is very likely that the scriptural literature of the Pāñcarātra is considerably older than the works which are currently available to us. A clue to this is contained in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of Śaṅkara, generally assigned by modern scholars to the early eighth century (Suthren Hirst 2005: 13-26). In his comments on 2.2.45 (418.4-5), Śaṅkara quotes a statement which he believes shows the ‘Pāñcarātra’ to be in conflict with the Veda. The statement reads “Not finding the supreme good in the four Vedas, Śāṇḍilya learnt this teaching” (*caturṣu vedeṣu paraṃ śreyo ’labdhvā śāṇḍilya idaṃ śāstram adhigatavān*). Śaṅkara does not name the source of this remark, and as far as I am aware it has not been found in any Pāñcarātra work. The fact that it is not in poetic metre strongly suggests that it is not a verbatim quote in any case. But we regularly find very similar sentiments expressed in the opening passages of the Saṃhitās, particularly in those which detail the “transmission of the teaching” (*śāstrāvatarāṇa* etc.). The most plausible explanation for this reference is surely that such passages, and hence such scriptural works, were already in existence in Śaṅkara’s day.

As we have seen, the idea that the JS, SS and PauṣS are the supreme Pāñcarātra scriptures is only expressed in a small minority of Pāñcarātra texts, and these were all composed in South India during or after the twelfth century. It is possible that in South India by this time these three works were already the oldest extant Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, and that the high esteem in which they were held by certain Pāñcarātriya authors is attributable in large part to this. That the *Svāyambhuvapañcarātra*, the *Mahālakṣmīsaṃhitā* and the *Jayottaratantra* may be named in later canonical lists does not, of course, mean that they were still in use at that time.

It is striking that three of the four scriptural works which contain the idea of the JS’s, SS’s and PauṣS’s supremacy mention these texts alongside a “root-Veda”, or an

“original Veda” (*mūlaveda*), an apparently mythical Urtext which is distinguished from the Vedas primarily on account of its monotheism, and the fact that it enjoins the pursuit of a single goal, namely liberation (*mokṣa*). The PārS and the ĪS present the JS, SS and PauṣS as having been revealed by god in the Kali Age, long after the Mūlaveda had been abandoned in favour of the “mixed *dharma*”. Alternatively, according to the ŚrīprśS, the JS, SS and PauṣS are themselves different versions of the Mūlaveda. These different versions are supposedly tailored to suit the varying abilities of students. The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, meanwhile, also presents the JS, SS and PauṣS as articulations of a single teaching, though in this instance they are said to *collectively* constitute this teaching, which means that they must be studied together. The divergent views on the relation between the JS, SS and PauṣS and the original teaching, and on the relation between the Saṃhitās themselves, most probably indicates that these ideas (of the three supreme Saṃhitās, and of a Pāñcarātra Urtext) were relatively new to these South Indian authors. The apparent lack of a canonical account of the history and status of these texts must have allowed these authors the possibility, however circumscribed, of participating in what Eric Hobsbawm (1992) has called “the invention of tradition”.



## 2. Divisions within the Pāñcarātra

### i.) Different kinds of Pāñcarātrika

Before turning to the classifications of different Pāñcarātra groups contained in several South Indian works belonging to the same religious context as the tradition of the supremacy of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS) and *Pauskarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS), it will be helpful here to summarise the additional textual evidence for there being distinct types of Pāñcarātrika. There are, from a period prior to our earliest Pāñcarātra scriptures, a number of textual sources which differentiate between Pāñcarātrikas and Bhāgavatas. I will refer to some of these below when I discuss Yāmuna's *Āgamaprāmāṇya*. Before that, however, it is worth looking at one such source, namely Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (BSBh), in a little more detail. In his comments on *sūtras* 2.2.42 and 2.2.44, Śaṅkara appears to attribute different theological positions to the Bhāgavatas and “those who follow the teachings of the Pāñcarātra” (*pañcarātrasiddhāntin*). The position of the Bhāgavatas is described as follows:

*bhagavān evaiko vāsudevo nirañjanajñānasvarūpaḥ paramārthatattvam; sa caturdhātmānaṃ pravibhajya pratiṣṭhitaḥ – vāsudevavyūharūpeṇa, saṃkarṣaṇavyūharūpeṇa, pradyumnavyūharūpeṇa, aniruddhavyūharūpeṇa ca; vāsudevo nāma paramātmā ucyate; saṃkarṣaṇo nāma jīvaḥ; pradyumno nāma manaḥ; aniruddho nāma ahaṃkāraḥ; teṣāṃ vāsudevaḥ parā prakṛtiḥ, itare saṃkarṣaṇādayaḥ kāryam; tam itthaṃbhūtaṃ parameśvaraṃ bhagavantam abhigamanopādāne jyāsvādhyāyayogair varṣaśatam iṣṭvā kṣīṇakleśo bhagavantam eva pratipadyata iti 1.* – “The unique Bhagavat, Vāsudeva, whose essence is pure knowledge, is the supreme reality. After dividing himself, he is possessed of a fourfold form: the form[s] (*vyūha*) Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. It is said that the Supreme Self is called Vāsudeva, the individual self is called Saṃkarṣaṇa, the mind is called Pradyumna, and the act of self-formulation is called Aniruddha.<sup>56</sup> Of these, Vāsudeva is the supreme material

<sup>56</sup> My translation of *ahaṃkāra* here as “the act of self-formulation” follows van Buitenen (1957). While the phrase may be somewhat cumbersome, it is preferable in this context to “ego” or “self-consciousness” etc., since in the scheme which identifies Aniruddha with the *ahaṃkāra* (MBh 12.326.37, 339.18ab), the former's role as the world-creator is emphasised over any sort of



cause (*prakṛti*), and the others, Saṃkarṣaṇa and so on, are the effect. After worshipping the Bhagavat, the supreme Lord, who is of such a nature [as described here] for a thousand years by means of [the five rites] approaching god, gathering the materials for worship, worship, textual study and meditation, [one's] pain will be diminished, and one will assuredly attain to the Bhagavat.” (BSBh 415.5-13)

The scheme outlined here, with the *jīva*, *manas* and *ahaṃkāra* personified by, respectively, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, is the same as that given in a passage of the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 12.326.20-39). Śaṅkara attributes it here to the Bhāgavatas, and in his commentary on 2.2.44, he suggests that those who follow the teachings of the Pañcarātra do not subscribe to this theory:

*na caite saṃkarṣaṇādayo jīvādibhāvenābhipreyante; kiṃ tarhi, īśvarā evaite sarve jñānaiśvaryaśaktibalavīryatejobhir aiśvaryadharmair anvitā abhyupagamyante – vāsudevā evaite sarve nirdoṣā niradhiṣṭhānā niravadyāś ceti... / ... / na ca pañcarātrasiddhāntibhir vāsudevādiṣu ekasmin sarveṣu vā jñānaiśvaryāditāratamyakṛtaḥ kaścīd bhedo 'bhyupagamyate; vāsudevā eva hi sarve vyūhā nirviṣeṣā iṣyante /.* – “And these [Vyūhas] Saṃkarṣaṇa and so on, are not thought of as really being the individual self etc. How [is it they are thought of] then? It is agreed that all these are lords, [who are] endowed with the lordly properties [omniscient] knowledge, sovereignty, power, strength, virility and splendour. They are all Vāsudevas, flawless, without substrate (i.e. cause?), and with no imperfections... /... / And it is agreed upon by those who follow the teachings of the Pañcarātra that there is no distinction between Vāsudeva and the others, all of whom are identical, [and that none] is created either by the hierarchy [of the properties, omniscient] knowledge and sovereignty etc. Indeed, all the Vyūhas are accepted as Vāsudevas without any distinctions.” (BSBh 416.17-417.2, ... 417.15-18)

What are we to make of these passages? Some scholars (e.g. Colas 2011: 297) believe that Śaṅkara is using the names ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pañcarātrasiddhāntin’ to refer to the same group. This position is perhaps based on the fact that the Bhāgavatas are described here as worshipping god in accordance with the “five times” (i.e. *abhiḡamana* etc.), a practice which is elsewhere expressly associated with the

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psychological principle. As van Buitenen shows, the creative function of the *ahaṃkāra* in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (as well as in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*) is continuous with older, mythical narratives wherein the primordial being combines and unites the principles of self-consciousness, self-formulation (*ahaṃkāra*, i.e. the exclamation *aham!*), and self- (and by extension, world-) creation.

Pāñcarātra.<sup>57</sup> But this interpretation has the problem of explaining why it is, then, that the doctrines linked with these denominations are so clearly different. For the Bhāgavatas hold, according to Śāṅkara, that the Vyūhas Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are caused to become manifest by Vāsudeva, the “supreme cause” (*parā prakṛtiḥ*). This idea is compatible with the scheme of the successive emergence of these deities, and the principles (*jīva*, *manas*, *ahaṃkāra*) they personify, that is articulated in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. However, according to Śāṅkara, the Pāñcarātrasiddhāntins reject this idea, and hold that there is no distinction whatsoever between the four Vyūhas. In the absence of any further textual support, it is difficult to arrive at any firm conclusions from the above passages. But at the least we can affirm that, in Śāṅkara’s time, there appear to have been doctrinal disagreements among Vaiṣṇavas who adhered to the theology of the four differentiated forms of god (*vyūha*).

That there were philosophical disagreements among Pāñcarātrikas, and that these disagreements were relatively important in shaping distinct Pāñcarātrika identities is suggested elsewhere in medieval Sanskrit literature. In two recent publications, Alexis Sanderson (2007, 2009a) has drawn attention to several references to the ‘Pāñcarātra’ tradition in Kashmirian works dating from the final centuries of the first millennium CE.<sup>58</sup> For the present purposes, two of these works are of particular interest. The first is the *Haraviṣaya*, a Sanskrit court epic written by Rājānaka Ratnākara around 830 CE. In the 47<sup>th</sup> canto (*sarga*) of this work, during a hymn to the goddess Caṇḍī, two groups of Vaiṣṇavas are distinguished (at verses 55-56): the Ekāyanas, whom I will discuss below, and the followers of the teaching relating to Saṃkarṣaṇa (*sāṃkarṣaṇa śāsana*). The second work, which is considerably more informative, is Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s *Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa* (NPP), a philosophical commentary on the c. seventh-eighth century *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* of Sadyojyotiḥ. The NPP was most probably written during the second half of the tenth century (Watson 2006). Here, two kinds of

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<sup>57</sup> See e.g. MBh 12.325.4/57-59, the seventh century stele inscription from Baset in Cambodia (K. 447, see Coedès 1942: 193-95), and a Śaiva work called the *Śrīkaṇṭhī* or the *Śrīkaṇṭhīyasamhitā*, at verses 51c-52 (Hanneder 1998: 244).

<sup>58</sup> Sanderson (2009a: 110-11) points to references to the Pāñcarātra in the *Nīlamatapūrāṇa*. The *Nīlamatapūrāṇa* may have been composed during the Kārkoṭa dynasty (c. 626-855 CE), but this is far from certain (ibid.).

Pāñcarātras are named: the ‘Sāṅkarṣaṇapāñcarātras’ and the ‘Saṃhitāpāñcarātras’. Sanderson (2009a: 108) thinks it very likely that these are the same groups distinguished by Ratnākara – in other words that the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras, presumably those who follow the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, are the same group as the Ekāyanas. The two groups differ from each other, according to Rāmakaṇṭha, in their views on the individual self (*jīva*). On the one hand, the Sāṅkarṣaṇapāñcarātras say that consciousness is merely a product of the “internal organ” (*antaḥkaraṇacaitanikāḥ*, NPP 87.22), by which is meant, presumably, the mental faculties *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra*.<sup>59</sup> On the other, the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras, along with “the knowers of the Upaniṣads” who subscribe to the theory of the transformation of the original cause, say the following: “Individual selves are truly distinct [from the mental faculties] but they are non-pervasive (i.e. atomic), and they originate from the imperishable supreme cause, which is either the referent of the word *brahman* [for those who are learned in the Upaniṣads], or is called Nārāyaṇa [for the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras]. Like a pot, for example, [originates from clay and will eventually dissolve back into it, so] the independent natures [of individual selves] originate from and [will eventually] dissolve back into their own cause.”<sup>60</sup> In a later passage, Rāmakaṇṭha says that for those who know the Upaniṣads, and for Pāñcarātras (presumably he is referring to both types of ‘Pāñcarātra’ here), liberation (*mukti*) is the absorption of the individual selves into *brahman* (for the former), and into the supreme material cause (*prakṛti*) called Nārāyaṇa (for the latter).<sup>61</sup>

Rāmakaṇṭha’s distinction between the Sāṅkarṣaṇapāñcarātras and the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras offers an intriguing glimpse into an episode in the history of the Pāñcarātra which is now almost completely lost to us. That distinct groups within the Pāñcarātra should have held opposing views on the ontology of individual selves seems somewhat surprising given that in the Pāñcarātra literature that is currently

<sup>59</sup> On which see *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 23, 24, 27, and 33. In the Pāñcarātra literature see e.g. *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 4.38, and *Lakṣmītantra* 7.30.

<sup>60</sup> NPP 91.18ff: *pariṇativedāntavidaḥ saṃhitāpāñcarātrās cāhuḥ satyaṃ bhinnā eva jīvātmānaḥ, te tu paramakaraṇād anaśvarād brahmapadavācyāt avyāpakā eva ghaṭādivat svakāraṇalayasvabhāvāś cotpadyante iti.*

<sup>61</sup> NPP 106.5ff: *eṣa ca prasaṅgo vedāntavidāṃ pāñcarātrāṇāṃ ca samānaḥ / tair api brahmaṇi nārāyaṇākhyāyāṃ ca parasyāṃ prakṛtau jīvātmanāṃ layo muktir abhyupagatā yataḥ /.*

available, such concerns do not figure prominently. Moreover, in the works by the Vedāntin defenders of Pāñcarātra orthodoxy, in the Vaikhānasa literature<sup>62</sup> and, as we will see presently, in the Pāñcarātra scriptures, different types of Pāñcarātrika are distinguished from one another not on account of opposing philosophical positions, but rather because of such factors as their different religious goals, liturgical practices, social class (*varṇa*), customs, everyday habits, and religious insignia.

In the Pāñcarātra works, there are several ways in which different types of worshipper are classified. Already in our earliest Saṃhitās, there are clear indications that important differences were recognised among devotees, and that one of the most basic distinctions, as attested to in the SS and the PauṣS, was that between those “with desires” (*sakāma*) and those “without desires” (*akāma*, *niṣkāma*). The former, inevitably, desire various mundane and heavenly rewards (see e.g. PauṣS 36.80-81, SS 24.432-433), while the latter seek liberation only (e.g. PauṣS 31.203, SS 18.51ab). According to these sources, the two types of worshipper participate alongside each other in the same rituals (PauṣS 31.201-227, SS 7.73), and both may be members of any of the four social classes (*varṇa*) (PauṣS 38.26ff, SS 7.43ab). In one place, the SS (7.37ff) reports that the devotees who seek liberation only perform divergent rites on different days of the month during the year-long vow (*vrata*) to worship the four forms of god,<sup>63</sup> and that after the worship, the *sakāma* and the *niṣkāma* devotees give different gifts to Brahmins (7.49c-51). Meanwhile, they perform the twelve-day vow (*dvādaśavrata*) in the same way, and it grants the same result to both (SS 7.73). Elsewhere (SS 19.84c-85), it is said that the “Heart mantra” is to be recited with a different ending depending on the goal of the initiate – *svāhā* for enjoyments (*bhoga*) and *namas* for liberation (*mokṣa*). The SS cites another example wherein the *niṣkāma* and the *sakāma* devotees worship the mantras of the “manifested deities”

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<sup>62</sup> Colas (1990) has shown that a number of Vaikhānasa works adumbrate sub-groups within the Pāñcarātra. Among these, the *Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa* (65.123-125) divides Pāñcarātrikas into *āgneya vaiṣṇavas* and *tāmasa vaiṣṇavas*, the former following the rites prescribed in the *sūtra* of Bodhāyana and others, the latter following those prescribed in the *sūtra* of Kātyāyana and others. The *Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa* is almost certainly earlier than Yāmuna, and may be as early as the ninth century (see Colas 1996: 95). Other Vaikhānasa texts offering variant subdivisions include the *Kriyādhikāra*, composed at the very latest during the thirteenth century, and possibly considerably earlier (ibid.), and the *Ānandasamhitā*, among the latest of the Vaikhānasa “medieval corpus”.

<sup>63</sup> In other words, the four Vyūhas Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha (SS 7.29-36).

(*vibhavadevāḥ*) in the same way, only the *niṣkāma* worshippers (called here “those who practise renunciation”, *saṃnyāsakārin*) abandon the inevitable fruits of this worship while the *sakāma* worshippers (or “those who desire the fruits”, *phalārthin*) accumulate them.<sup>64</sup> A passage in the PauṣS (19.51-52b) locates this distinction firmly within orthodox tradition (*smṛti*) when it calls these contrasting methods, respectively, the way of “disengagement” or “abstention” (*nivṛtti*), and the way of “engagement” (*pravṛtti*), terms to which I shall return in Chapter Seven when I discuss the *Nārāyaṇīya*.<sup>65</sup> This passage from the PauṣS is especially notable for its claim that those who seek only pleasures or “enjoyments” (*bhoga*) achieve success therein by means of “engagement”, but that once they are satiated by such pleasures, they practise “disengagement”.<sup>66</sup>

In this last example from the PauṣS, the way of “disengagement” or desireless (*niṣkāma*) worship appears to be considered the higher practice for the more advanced initiates. It is striking that while both the SS and the PauṣS contain passages (as referred to above) in which *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* are presented as apparently equally legitimate modes of worship, the PauṣS also contains a number of passages wherein *sakāma* worship is condemned, or at the least considered very inferior. Two good examples of this are found in the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter. In a verse (PauṣS 31.202c-203) I shall return to below when I discuss the Ekāyanas, *sakāma* worshippers are said to attain only meagre rewards (*svalpaphala*), in comparison to *akāma* worshippers who attain the world of Acyuta (*acyutaloka*). And before this we are told the following: “The omniscient abiding in the heart does not permit [worship that is performed with] desire. One who grants heaven to his devotees even when it is not asked for – what is

<sup>64</sup> SS 10.48-50b: *saṃnyāsaṃ sañcayaṃ vāpi kṛtvā samyak kṛtasya vai / mantrarūpānukāriṇyā mudranīyaṃ ca mudrayā // phalārthaṃ prasavaṃ yena naiti saṃnyāsakāriṇām / phalaparyavasānaṃ ca kālam āgamacoditam // hartuṃ no yujyate yena siddhād yais tu phalārthinām /*. See Hikita’s (1991) translation of this passage.

<sup>65</sup> See *Mānavadharmasāstra* 12.88-90, where it is said that there are two kinds of Vedic act: *pravṛtta*, which leads to increased happiness, and *nivṛtta*, which leads to supreme bliss (*naiḥśreyasika*). Action undertaken to satisfy desires here and in the next life is called *pravṛtta*, while action which is free from desire (*niṣkāma*) and is accompanied by knowledge is called *nivṛtta*.

<sup>66</sup> PauṣS 19.51-52b: *pravṛttiś ca nivṛttiś ca karma caitat dvidhā ’bjaja / jayanti bhogaikaratāḥ pravṛttena tu karmaṇā // paritrptās tu sambhogaiḥ nivṛttenācaranti ca /*

it that is not given by him? Therefore, one should abandon requests!”<sup>67</sup> Such sentiments provide a striking contrast to other passages in the PauṣS (at e.g. 23.3-5, 31.227, 36.80-81, 38.26-28) which address *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worshippers without favouring one kind over the other. They also contrast with the presentation of *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worship in the SS, which does not contain a similar bias.<sup>68</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that the passages in the PauṣS which favour *niṣkāma* over *sakāma*, and exhort the rejection of the latter, are the work of a different author from the passages in the same text wherein both approaches are presented as equally valid. Given that the SS does not contain condemnations of *sakāma* worship, and that this bias is also almost entirely absent from the JS,<sup>69</sup> it is likely that the passages in the PauṣS which strongly favour *niṣkāma* worship are the work of a later redactor. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that it is in the later, South Indian Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, as we will see below, that worldly pleasures or enjoyments, and supernatural powers (i.e. *bhoga/siddhi*) are commonly treated as inferior or even as illegitimate religious goals.

Notwithstanding these presumably later additions to the PauṣS, there are many passages in this work, as there are also in the SS, wherein *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worshippers are depicted as participating alongside each other in the same rites. In such cases it appears that there would have been no observable difference between the two kinds of worshipper. Both could belong to any of the four social classes (*varṇa*) and, as we have seen, it is indicated in the PauṣS that a worshipper may go from being *sakāma* to being *niṣkāma* purely according to his own inclinations. Judging by such passages, then, all initiates appear to have been eligible for either mode of worship. However, both the SS and the PauṣS elsewhere contain a classification of the different

<sup>67</sup> PauṣS 31.149c-150: *kāṅkṣitaṃ nānujānāti sarvajño hṛdaye sthitaḥ // aprārthito 'pi svargaṃ tu bhaktānāṃ yo dadāti ca / kim adeyaṃ hi tasyāsti tasmād abhyarthanāṃ tyajet //*

<sup>68</sup> The only exception I could find is at SS 19.146-147b, where it is said that during the liberating ascent of the individual self (*jīva*) through the six paths (*adhvan*), the same self becomes indifferent (*virakta*) to enjoyments (*bhoga*) such as miniaturisation (*aṇiman*) etc. Again, see Hikita's (1993) translation of this passage.

<sup>69</sup> An exception is at JS 5.11ff, where it is said that the worshipper of the mantra should not desire *siddhis*. The term *siddhi* here (at JS 5.11b) appears to be synonymous with *bhoga* (“enjoyment”), which is mentioned in the previous verse. This is a very unusual statement for the JS, which otherwise lists enjoyments (*bhoga/bhukti*) and liberation (*mokṣa/mukti*) as equally valid achievements. Rastelli (2000: 372 n. 11) has identified this chapter of the JS, along with chapters 3 and 4, as comprising a textual unit which is separate from the rest of the JS.

kinds of devotee wherein eligibility for particular forms of worship is constrained by social class and religious identity. Both of these classifications adopt a fourfold model. I will discuss that found in the Pauṣ below. In the SS, we read near the beginning of the second chapter:

*aṣṭāṅgayogasiddhānām hr̥dyāganiratātmanām // yoginām adhikāraḥ syād ekasmin hr̥dayeśaye / vyāmiśrayāgayuktānām viprāṇām vedavādīnām // samantram tu caturvyūhe tv adhikāro na cānyathā / trayāṇām kṣatriyādīnām prapannānām ca tattvataḥ // amantram adhikāras tu caturvyūhakriyākrame / sakriye mantracakre tu vaibhavīye 'vivekinām // mamatāsannirastānām svakarmaniratātmanām / karmavānmanasaiḥ samyag bhaktānām parameśvare // caturṇām adhikāro vai prāpte dīkṣākrame sati /* – “With regard to the one who dwells in the heart, the authority [to worship this god] is for yogins who are accomplished in the eight-limbed yoga, whose selves are intent upon internal worship (literally “the sacrifice in the heart”). Regarding [the worship of] the four Vyūhas with mantras, the authority is for none other than the Brahmins who are versed in the Vedas [and] are engaged in mixed worship. And for the [other] three [social classes] Kṣatriya and so on, who have truly taken refuge [with god], [their] authority is [also] in the series of rites relating to [the worship of] the four Vyūhas, but [they must perform these] without mantras. For the four [classes, Brahmin etc.]<sup>70</sup> who are completely devoted to the supreme lord in action, speech and thought, [and] who are intent upon their own duties, but who lack discrimination [and] who have not cast off egotism, [their] authority, provided they have been properly initiated, is with regard to the mantras relating to the Vibhava manifestations, and the attendant rites.” (SS 2.7c-12b)

In his gloss on these verses in his Sanskrit commentary on the SS, the *Sātvatatāntrabhāṣya* (STBh), Alaśīṅgabhāṭṭa draws attention to a very similar classification of initiates that is found in the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT). The major difference in the LT’s presentation is that there are only three categories of initiate: the experts in yoga who have the authority to worship the Supreme Self, those engaged in “mixed yoga” who worship the Vyūhas, and those “lacking in discrimination” who worship the Vibhava deities.<sup>71</sup> In other words, the LT does not divide the “mixed worshippers”, as the SS does, into Brahmins on the one hand, and Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras on the other. The SS’s fourfold classification of initiates is itself mapped onto a threefold

<sup>70</sup> My interpretation of this last category of initiate is informed by Alaśīṅgabhāṭṭa’s comments on these verses. For a quite different translation of SS 2.10c-12b, see Schrader (1916: 152).

<sup>71</sup> LT 11.48c-49: *saṃsiddhayogātattvānām* (or *susiddhayogātattvānām*, see Krishnamacharya 1959: 39) *adhikāraḥ paramātmani // vyāmiśrayāgayuktānām madhyānām vyūhabhāvane / vaibhavīyādirūpeṣu vivekavidhurātmanām //*.

model of worship, i.e. of god's *para*, *vyūha* and *vibhava* forms, which is referred to in the SS's opening chapter (SS 1.23), which forms the organising structure for most of Chapters 2-12, and which is reflected in the three types of initiation (*vibhava*, *vyūha* and *sūkṣmā dīkṣā*) that are introduced at SS 16.28c-29b.

There is no obvious correspondence between the SS's fourfold classification of worshippers and that found in several South Indian works which I will address below. Nor, despite the rather awkward disparity between the four types of initiate and the three types of worship, is there any obvious indication, as far as I can see, that SS 2.7c-12b has been added to the text by a later redactor, though it is notable that the only other reference to "mixed worship" in the SS occurs in the final chapter (SS 25.289ab) which, I will argue below, is a later addition to the text. The prohibition against Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas worshipping the Vyūhas with mantras is particularly striking, especially in a supposedly "early" Saṃhitā. As we will see, this restrictive attitude towards social class is not found in the JS or the PauṣS, and is more in keeping with the later South Indian works. That there are four types of initiate distinguished may itself be interpreted as an attempt to establish a classificatory method which is at least formally consistent with the Brahminical model of the four social classes (*varṇa*) and/or stages of life (*āśrama*).

Certainly, the typology of Vaiṣṇavas found in another scriptural work, the *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* (SanS), very obviously represents a conscious effort to situate its own system (*tantra*) within the domain of Brahminical orthopraxy. It does this through applying a fourfold system of classification to the four traditional modes or stages of life (*āśrama*), namely that of the celibate student (*brahmacārin*), householder (*grhastha*), hermit or forest-dweller (*vānaprastha*), and mendicant or ascetic (*bhikṣuka* or *yati* in the SanS). This fourfold division of the four *āśramas* is formally consistent with the earliest extant classification of the four *āśramas*, which is found in both the *Āśramopaniṣad* and the *Vaikhānasadharmasūtra* (Olivelle 1993: 165-166), though with three exceptions (Vaikhānasa, Haṃsa and Paramahaṃsa) the subdivisions are different in this case. The SanS, which may be one of our earliest South Indian Saṃhitās since it is quoted by Yāmuna in his *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (160.15ff), offers the



following classification of those who belong to the *āśrama* system and are initiated into the Viṣṇumaṇḍala (SanS *Brahmarātra* 5.4c-42):<sup>72</sup>

Celibate students are known as either Brahmacārin, Liṅgin, Śiṣya or Upāsaka. The Brahmacārin carries a staff, wears an antelope hide (*ajina*), is devoted to studying the Veda and worshipping god, eats unsalted food (*akṣāralavaṇāśin*) and food acquired by begging (*bhaikṣāhāra*), and is moderate in his diet (*mitāśana*). He is always intent upon honouring his teacher (SanS *Brahmarātra* 5.7-8). The Liṅgin, after giving up his ritual duties (*karmāṇi samtyajya*, or his desires for the fruits thereof?), also eats moderately food that is acquired by begging. He bears the marks of the conch, discus, mace, bow, *śrīvatsa* and Kaustubha gem, and worships either god (i.e. Viṣṇu) or Vainateya (Garuḍa) (5.9-10). The Śiṣya also begs for his food, eats moderately, serves his teacher, and worships Hari (5.11-12b). The Upāsaka performs his ablutions and worships god at dawn, noon and dusk, is devoted to mantra-repetition (*japa*), the fire-sacrifice (*homa*), study, and the eight-syllabled mantra, and honours his teacher (5.12c-14b).

Householders, the second stage of life, consist of Vratins, Gṛhasthas, Āḍhyas and Ācāryas. The Vratin fasts and performs vows (*vrata*), is devoted to worshipping, eats moderately and at night, only makes sexual advances on his wife at the times of the month when she is at her most fertile (*ṛtugāmin*), has his senses under control, and is devoted to the *mūlamantra* (5.15c-16). The Gṛhastha also fasts and performs vows, studies the Saṃhitās, and supports his students (5.17-18b). The Āḍhya (literally “wealthy”) is free from desire and anger, is devoted to his guests, whom he feeds, is happy, participates in religious festivals, and supports devotees (5.18c-20b). The Ācārya is learned in the rite of installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and in Vedic and Tantric worship (*yāge vaidikatāntrike*), is temperate, kind to his pupils, and is a knower and proclaimer of the Tantra (5.20c-22b).

Forest dwellers or hermits are also four: the Vaikhānasa, Tantrin, Guru and Niṣkala. The Vaikhānasa eats unsalted food, has a wife and son, lives either at home

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<sup>72</sup> Rastelli (2002a: 132), remarking on the central role of the maṇḍala in the SanS in general, notes the following: “In this text, ‘one should undergo the initiation’ is expressed by the phrase *praviṣed dīkṣāṃ cakramaṇḍale*, ‘one should attain the initiation in the *cakramaṇḍala*,’ which shows the centrality of the maṇḍala in the *dīkṣā*.”

or in a hermitage (*āśrama*), is not lazy (*atandrita*), explicates the Saṃhitās, sleeps on the floor on an antelope hide, and is devoted to meditation (*dhyāna*) and knowledge (5.23c-25). The Tantrin lives outside of a village, worships god at dawn, noon and dusk, is devoted to the fire-sacrifice (*homa*) and the repetition of mantras (*japa*), though only of Tantric mantras, is clothed either in a garment made of bark (*valkala*) or in an antelope hide, sleeps on *darbha* grass, and is devoted to the eight-syllabled mantra (5.26-27). The Guru also wears either bark or an antelope hide, performs ablutions at dawn, noon and dusk, feeds on roots and fruits and has no fixed abode (*aniyatāvāsa*), frequents sacred bathing places (*tīrtha*), is devoted to meditation (*dhyāna*), is always worshipping Viṣṇu, and recites the twelve-syllabled mantra, knowing well the reality which it designates (5.28-30b). The Niṣkala is clothed in the same way, is devoted to the eight-syllabled mantra, eats only at night (*naktabhojin*), is easily satisfied and free from envy, worships at dawn, noon and dusk, is indifferent to praise and blame, is dispassionate, and observes a vow of silence (*maunin*) (5.30c-33b).

Finally, the ascetic (*yati*) is either a Haṃsa, Paramahaṃsa, Bhagavant or Prabhu. The Haṃsa wears the mark of the conch and discus, carries a single staff (*ekadaṇḍin*), is skilled in the ritual of the Tantras (*tantrakarma*), wears either red-brown garments (*kāṣāya*) or an antelope skin, and has the hair-tuft (*śikhā*) and the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) (5.34c-36b). The Paramahaṃsa lives alone, also carries a single staff and is skilled in the ritual of the Tantras, is devoted to meditation, knowledge and non-dual philosophy (*advaita*), has abandoned the hair-tuft and the sacred thread, and observes a vow of celibacy (5.36c-38). The Bhagavant bears the marks of conch and discus, and always carries a cushion made of grass (*braśī*), a shoulder pole (*śikya*), a gourd pitcher (*kamaṇḍalu*), the triple staff (*tridaṇḍin*), and the *yogapaṭṭika* cloth. He is devoted to Vāsudeva, and to the eight-syllabled mantra (5.39-40). Last of all, the Prabhu, like the Bhagavant, carries a triple staff and is devoted to the eight-syllabled mantra, and he also carries a Garuḍa banner (*garuḍadhvaja*), and worships god at dawn, noon and dusk (5.41-42).

The classification of the sixteen different types of initiated Vaiṣṇava summarised here is, as far as I am aware, not found in any other text. Needless to say, the fourfold

division of each *āśrama* is suspiciously neat, and its formal consistency with earlier classifications was very likely a more significant motivation to the author than was an accurate reflection of the reality of the situation. Nonetheless, there are several points of interest here. Firstly, the inclusion of the Vaikhānasas and the “single-staffed” Hamsas and Paramahamsas is especially notable. These are the only categories of *āśramin* in the SanS’s list which are also named in the previously mentioned *Āśramopaniṣad* and *Vaikhānasadharmasūtra*, and they are also the only types of Vaiṣṇava listed here of whom we can confidently say that they were very probably not initiated Pāñcarātrikas, despite their inclusion in the ‘Viṣṇumaṇḍala’. For in the previous chapter of the SanS (*Brahmarātra* 4.30-31), twice-born Vaikhānasas (*vaikhānasā dvijāḥ*) are explicitly contrasted with “initiates” (*dīkṣitāḥ*), while the Hamsas and Paramahamsas are clearly both Advaitins (though only the latter are explicitly described as such), as is indicated by the fact that they carry a “single staff” (see Olivelle 1993: 172). The inclusion of both of these groups in the Viṣṇumaṇḍala is very likely an attempt by the author of this passage to include and thereby subordinate members of other religious traditions within his own. The order in which the different types of Vaiṣṇava are named suggests an ascending hierarchy, and the Vaikhānasas are mentioned first among the hermits, while the Hamsas and Paramahamsas precede the “triple staffed” Bhagavant and Prabhu. However, their inclusion here also suggests that the boundaries between Vaiṣṇava traditions in this particular time and place may not have been as clear as is ordinarily supposed. Certainly, the verses referred to above in the SanS’s previous chapter illustrate that Vaikhānasas had a certain authority in the eyes of the authors of this work. For it is said there that they may be accepted as judges in a legal dispute (*vyavahāra*) when an initiate (*dīkṣita*) is not available, and indeed that they are to be preferred in such circumstances over initiated students (*brahmacārin*).<sup>73</sup>

It is certainly notable that the terms ‘Pāñcarātra/Pāñcarātrika’ do not feature in the SanS’s classification of the sixteen different types of Vaiṣṇava, and that aside from the references to the twelve-syllabled and eight-syllabled mantras, there is very little here that identifies these *āśramins* as belonging to the Pāñcarātra in particular. In this

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<sup>73</sup> The passage in which these verses appear in the SanS is translated and discussed by Derrett (1978).

regard, it is especially striking that the Upāsaka, Tantrin, Guru, Niṣkala and Prabhu are all described as worshipping god (and/or bathing) three times a day (*trisaṃdhyā*), i.e. at dawn, noon, and dusk, while there is no mention of the worship at “five times” (*pañcakāla*) which, according to the textual sources, was to become such a characteristic Pāñcarātri practice in South India. We may interpret the SanS’s classification of “initiates into the Viṣṇumaṇḍala”, perhaps, as an attempt to impose a cohesiveness and a systematicity onto diverse traditions of Vaiṣṇava worship, where in reality there was probably little of either.

The same can also presumably be said of the JS’s classification of fifteen different types of Vaiṣṇava. Unlike the SS and the PauṣS, the JS does not make the basic distinction between *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worshippers, tending to view liberation and enjoyments (*bhoga/bhukti*) or perfections (*siddhi*) as simultaneously valid goals for the initiate (see e.g. JS 6.4, 8.2, 14.80, 16.4, 56-58b, 20.243ab, 31.44, 33.53). The SS (e.g. 19.4, 85c-86, 123) and the PauṣS (e.g. 29.61, 30.6, 32.126b-131) also refer to devotees who aspire to both goals. The absence of a distinction between *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worshippers in the JS may indicate that this distinction was a later innovation. In Chapters 20-22 of the JS, fifteen different types of Vaiṣṇava are named, classified into three groups of five. The first group consists of the Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānasa, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin. These are described in the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter as follows:

The Yati is a celibate ascetic who worships Viṣṇu alone in thought, word and deed. He sees Viṣṇu in all beings, and all beings in Viṣṇu. He obtains cooked food (*siddhānna*) from Brahmins without having to beg (*ayācita*). He has a shaved head and beard, wears a red-brown garment, carries only a staff, and is himself a Brahmin (JS 22.6-10). The Ekāntin, who is also a renunciant, but whose social class is not stated, I discuss at length in Chapter Eight. The Vaikhānasa is a propertied (*parigrahavat*) Brahmin who supports his family by begging from other Brahmins, and by wealth obtained without begging from Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. He has matted hair (*jaṭin*), carries an umbrella (*chatrin*, though normally *chattrin*), and wears white (JS 22.13c-15b). In this description, the Vaikhānasa appears to inhabit a role which is somewhere between that of householder and renunciant, which may reflect an attempt by the author of these verses to present an account of Vaikhānasas which is consistent

with their status as hermits (*vānaprastha*) in older literature such as the Dharmaśāstras (see e.g. Colas 2003). The Karmasāttvata, who is elsewhere called simply ‘Sātvata’ (JS 20.267c, 21.81a), is a Brahmin who supports his family by earning a livelihood (*vṛtti*) performing rituals for a king (JS 22.15c-16). This identifies the Karmasāttvatas as professional priests. We know from Yāmuna’s *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (e.g. 13.10-15.5), wherein ‘Sātvatas’ or ‘Sāttvatas’ are accused of performing *pūjā* for a living (*vṛtito devatāpūjā*, 14.12), that in South India such persons were subject to severe criticism by certain “orthodox” opponents of the Pāñcarātra.<sup>74</sup> The Śikhin, finally, is a Brahmin who worships Viṣṇu in his heart, performs the ritual for the ancestors, and is eligible for the four modes of life (*cāturāśramya*, JS 22.17-19b).

Before we move on to the next group of five Vaiṣṇavas in the JS, it is worth mentioning here the close similarity between the classificatory scheme just mentioned, and that found in the later *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* (ViṣṇuS). The ViṣṇuS, which I will discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters, is a South Indian Pāñcarātra scripture which may have been written as late as the fourteenth century (Unni 1991: 7-10). In the second chapter of this work, the following is declared: “Just as there are many different branches of the Veda tree, so it is recognised by sages that there are divisions within the Pañcarātra. These [divisions] are distinguished from one another by their having different rituals and texts.”<sup>75</sup> Thereupon the five divisions are named as Vaikhānasa, Sāttvata, Śikhin, Ekāntika and Mūlaka (ViṣṇuS 2.26cd). The separate divisions are presented here as “lineages” (*gocarāḥ*), and a lineage is said to be equivalent to a “family” or a “clan” (*kulam*, ViṣṇuS 2.25c). I comment further on this passage in the ViṣṇuS in Chapter Eight.

The second group of five Vaiṣṇavas listed in the JS (22.28-37) consists of the Āpta, the Añjalikārin, the Anāpta, the Ārambhin and the Saṃpravartin. At JS 22.28-34b, the Āptas are themselves subdivided into the Sāttvata (who worships god in accordance with the “five times”, *pañcakālyena*), the Añjalikārin, and the Vipra (who performs the installation rites, *pratiṣṭhā*). However, elsewhere the Añjalikārin, who is

<sup>74</sup> Yāmuna himself rejects this accusation and, as I will demonstrate shortly, does not differentiate between ‘Sātvatas’ and other ‘Bhāgavata’ Brahmins.

<sup>75</sup> ViṣṇuS 2.22-23b: *yathā tu vedavṛkṣasya śākhābhedā hy anekaśaḥ / tahtā bhedaḥ samākhyātāḥ pañcarātrasya sūribhiḥ // kriyāpāthaviśeṣais tu bhidyante te prthak prthak /*

described as abandoning the fruit of the ritual (*saṃnyāsakarmayogena phalasamṣpad vinaiva hi*, JS 22.31ab) and as desiring liberation only, is listed as an independent Vaiṣṇava (JS 20.267a, 21.87a). The Anāpta is said to perform the ritual enjoined for Āptas, but without abandoning the duties appropriate to their social class (*varṇadharmā*, JS 22.34c-35b) – in contrast to the Āptas, we must presume. The Ārambhin is described as worshipping in order to attain wealth (JS 22.35c-36b), and the Saṃpravartin as worshipping Hari “in the wrong way” (*amārgena*, JS 22.36c-37b). In an earlier chapter (JS 20.265-270), each of these five (including the Añjalikārin) together with the five belonging to the first group (the Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānasa, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin) are called ‘Pāñcarātrika’, and are seated together during an installation rite and instructed to recite mantras belonging to the Ekāyana recension (*śākhā*). I will discuss this passage and its implications below.

Lastly, the JS’s third group of five Vaiṣṇavas consists of the Yogin, the Japañiṣṭha, the Tāpasa, the Śāstrajña and the Śāstradhāraka (JS 22.39-56). I have discussed the latter two already in the Introduction. The Yogin is said to think of god as located in his heart, and to practise *samādhi* and recite mantras in the temple (JS 22.39-41). The Japañiṣṭha, like the Yati, wears a red-brown garment and carries a staff, and also recites mantras or hymns of praise (*stuti*) in a low voice (*upāṃśu*) (JS 22.42-45b). The Tāpasa performs the Cāndrāyaṇa fast and various ablutions, and eats food acquired by begging, or else survives on milk, roots and fruits (JS 22.45c-51b). It is notable that the members of this last group of five do not participate along with the other ten types of Vaiṣṇava in the installation rite mentioned above (i.e. at JS 20.265-270). While the JS’s classificatory scheme in general seems, like the SanS’s, to be rather too symmetrically arranged to be genuinely descriptive, these last five form an especially disparate group. The presence of the Śāstrajña and the Śāstradhāraka as distinct types of Vaiṣṇava alongside e.g. the Yogin and the Tāpasa seems particularly arbitrary. Elsewhere in the JS (e.g. 1.58), we should note that “knower of the *śāstra*” is used, rather, as a general term of commendation, and that in the SS (17.138), for example, protecting the scripture (*āgama*) is incumbent upon *all* initiates.

It is highly significant that the Vaikhānasas are included here among the 15 kinds of Vaiṣṇava, for it indicates that these passages (i.e. JS 20.265-270, 21.76c-97,

22.1-81b) do not belong to the earliest portions of the JS which, as we have seen, appear to have been composed in either North India or the Upper Deccan. As far as we know, the Vaikhānasas were restricted to South India throughout the premodern period, which suggests that the composition of these passages also occurred in the south.<sup>76</sup> This hypothesis is supported by the fact that JS 22.3-5 introduces the diverse (*vaiṣyāmya*) devotees as all performing the worship of god at the “five times” (*pañcakālaniṣevin*), which is then briefly described at JS 22.64c-74b. Elsewhere in the JS, as Rastelli (2000a: 108) has pointed out, the worship according to the “five times” hardly figures at all. Although this fact alone does not provide conclusive evidence that these passages were composed in South India, among the scriptural works it was certainly in the later southern Saṃhitās that the worship at the “five times” emerges as a central, characteristic feature of the Pāñcarātra liturgy.

It is very difficult to say when these passages may have been added to the JS. Although the JS’s first group of five Vaiṣṇavas is very similar to a classification of Pāñcarātrikas found in the ViṣṇuS, a late, South Indian work, its list of 15 types of Vaiṣṇava is not found elsewhere. I will argue in a later chapter that JS 20.265-270, at least, shares a number of features with interpolated sections of the SS and the PauṣS, and that the latter appear to be earlier than the more “sectarian” portions of texts such as the PādS and the PārS, which I will address shortly. Presumably JS 20.265-270 is the work of the same redactor/s as JS 21.76c-97, and JS 22. We can be sure, at any rate, that the majority of the descriptions of the different types of Pāñcarātrika or Vaiṣṇava which I have summarised in this section pre-dated Yāmuna, to whose *Āgamaprāmāṇya* I now turn.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> “[T]here is no textual or epigraphic evidence”, writes Willis (2009: 226), “to suggest that the Vaikhānasas ever lived in north India”. Colas (1996: 53 n. 1) addresses the question of the presence of the Vaikhānasas in the JS thus: “La présence des vaikhānasa, groupe social du sud sans doute, qu’elle décrit dans ses rituels ne dément-elle pas la thèse de son origine septentrionale... à moins d’admettre que la version qui est entre nos mains est une “réédition” complète d’une version du nord”.

<sup>77</sup> I am accepting Young’s (2007: 237) estimate for the lifetime of Yāmuna as c. 1050-1125 CE, with the ĀP being written “in the late eleventh or early twelfth century” (ibid: 260).

ii.) *Distinct Pāñcarātri identities in the Āgamaprāmāṇya*

It is clear that in his *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (ĀP) Yāmuna distinguishes between several types of Bhāgavata or ‘Sātvata’/‘Sāttvata’ (both spellings are used, the former more commonly) who accept the authority of the Pāñcarātra scriptures.<sup>78</sup> The unsystematic manner in which these distinctions are made, however, means that the identity of each distinguishable “type” is not altogether obvious. Perhaps unsurprisingly, modern scholars have arrived at different interpretations with regard to precisely which distinct groups are recognised by Yāmuna. Neevel (1977: 30-37) contends that the ĀP distinguishes between four classes of Bhāgavata which he names as: (i) temple servants; (ii) professional temple priests (*arcaka*); (iii) Bhāgavata Brahmins who perform worship only for themselves, and who additionally perform “a distinctive series of forty sacraments (*saṃskāras*)... based upon the now lost but inferable Ekāyana Śākhā” (ibid.: 33); and (iv) Bhāgavata Brahmins who perform both Pāñcarātra and Vedic rites. Rastelli (2006) and Young (2007) concur that there are four distinct groups represented by Yāmuna, though each differ in their interpretations as to the identity of these groups.

The first of Neevel’s four “classes”, that of the “temple servants”, is described quite clearly in the ĀP (150.4ff). Members of this class, called *vaiśyavrātyas* by Yāmuna’s Mīmāṃsaka opponents,<sup>79</sup> are uninitiated (and therefore ineligible for worshipping the Bhagavat directly) and are classed as ‘Bhāgavatas’ purely on account of their association, as servants and temple guards (*prāsādapālaka*), with the temple worship of Vāsudeva. Contra Rastelli, Young (2007: 241-242 n. 189) argues that members of Neevel’s second class, the “professional temple priests” who earn a living by performing sacrifices or worship for others, are one branch of the group of

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<sup>78</sup> In this work the terms ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Sātvata’ are usually synonymous, the notable exception to the rule being Yāmuna’s Mīmāṃsaka opponent’s reference to “the threefold doctrine (*tridhā matam*) – Bhākta, Bhāgavata and Sātvata” at ĀP 54.3. When Yāmuna speaks “in his own voice” as it were, he treats both names as designating the same group - see for example ĀP 148.11, and 155.1-4. That both terms refer also to the ‘Pāñcarātra’ can be inferred from ĀP 1.7-2.4 where Bhāgavata “doctrine” (*matam*) and “Pāñcarātra *tantra*” are used interchangeably, and ĀP 7.1-2 and 170.13-171.4 where ‘Sātvata’ and ‘Pāñcarātra’ are coterminous.

<sup>79</sup> A *vaiśyavrātya* is one who has lost his status as a member of the Vaiśya class as a consequence of neglecting his Vaiśya duties. Manu (10.23) lists the Sātvatas among the offspring of *vaiśyavrātyas*.



Bhāgavata Brahmins whom Neevel distinguishes as his *fourth* class i.e. those that perform both Pāñcarātra and Vedic rites. This branch of Bhāgavata Brahmins are a class of professional priests, says Young, who belong to the Vājasaneyasākhā. There also exists, according to Young's reading of the ĀP, another branch of Bhāgavata Brahmins belonging to the Vājasaneyasākhā who perform *pūjā* only for themselves. These represent Young's third group. Her fourth consists of Ekāyanas who claim membership of a lost Vedic recension (*śākhā*), and who "have some temple involvement."

Rastelli's (2006: 219) interpretation of Yāmuna's account is different again. Like Neevel, she distinguishes between the professional temple priests who have undergone *dīkṣā* and the Vājasaneyasākhā Bhāgavata Brahmins who perform both Pāñcarātra and Vedic rites. Unlike Neevel, however, she does not interpret the ĀP as limiting members of the Ekāyanaśākhā to the performance of *svārthapūjā*, or "worship for oneself", i.e. the form of worship "whose fruit goes to the worshipper" (Brunner 1990: 6). And unlike Young, Rastelli does not identify either the *svārthapūjaka*s or those who perform rituals for others (i.e. the professional temple priests who are called *parārthapūjaka*) solely with members of the Vājasaneyasākhā.

On my own reading of the ĀP, Yāmuna clearly distinguishes between different types of Bhāgavata on three separate occasions. In the first instance, he distinguishes between the temple servants and the Bhāgavatas by whom "the group of actions are performed daily: "approaching" the god (*abhigamana*), the gathering of the materials for worship (*upādāna*), worship (literally "offering", *ijyā*), the study of texts (*svādhyāya*), and meditation (*yoga*)" (ĀP 151.1-2). The Bhāgavatas who perform these daily duties connected with the five times (*pañcakāla*) are the Pāñcarātriaka Brahmins who are the subject of Yāmuna's defence in the ĀP. These are then themselves subdivided by Yāmuna (at ĀP 154.11-155.2) into those who worship Hari for their profession (*vṛtti*) and those who perform *pūjā* only for themselves (*svārtha*). Then, at the end of the ĀP (169.3ff), Yāmuna again subdivides the *pañcakālīka* Brahmins into those who follow the Vājasaneyasākhā, and those who have abandoned

the *dharma* of the triple Veda (*trayīdharma*), and who perform the forty sacraments (*saṃskāra*) enjoined by the Ekāyanaśruti.<sup>80</sup>

Whilst the aforementioned scholars are surely right to highlight the “categorical” distinction between the professional temple priests and those who perform rituals only for themselves, I am hesitant in accepting Young’s proposal that Yāmuna represents both of these “groups” as belonging solely to the Vājasaneyasaṅgha. Although there are certain passages within the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās which would support identifying Yāmuna’s professional priests as Vājasaneyins,<sup>81</sup> there also exist passages which should warn *against* any such easy identification.<sup>82</sup> These ambiguities can possibly be ironed out with recourse to the chronology of the relevant literature, and also can be explained by the fact that we are clearly dealing with both “internal” and “external” descriptions among distinct Pāñcarātra traditions. We should hardly expect, for example, that a description of the Vājasaneyasaṅgha by an “external” Ekāyana author will completely coincide with an “internal” Vājasaneya *self*-description. However, more pertinent to my present purposes, irrespective of what is found in the broader Pāñcarātra literature, I can find no unequivocal suggestion in the ĀP that the professional priests belong only to the Vājasaneyasaṅgha. Indeed, beyond claiming that the professional priests he is defending are initiated Bhāgavata Brahmins (ĀP 154-158) whose “meagre livelihoods” (*vṛttikarsitāḥ*) lead them to “perform sacrifices professionally for eminent Vaiṣṇavas” (ĀP 155.3-4), Yāmuna gives no information

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<sup>80</sup> That followers of the Ekāyanaśākhā perform the *pañcakālīka* rites is asserted at ĀP 170.3-6. Young (2007: 238-239) interprets ‘Ekāyana’ in this instance as denoting a “general orientation”, synonymous with the terms Bhāgavata and Pāñcarātra. I do not agree with this reading, but even if it is correct it would still mean that Yāmuna is including the Ekāyanas (i.e. as genuine Bhāgavatas) among the *pañcakālīka* Bhāgavatas. It might be added that in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature, followers of both the Ekāyanaśākhā (see PārS 1.44ab; 9.48b; 10.252c, 287b-289; and the *Bhārgavatantra* 24.19) and the Vājasaneyasaṅgha (see PādS cp 21.13) are said to perform the *pañcakāla* rites.

<sup>81</sup> Yāmuna claims (ĀP 156.6-158.3) that the professional temple priests in question have undergone the Pāñcarātrika sacrament of initiation (*dīkṣāsaṃskāra*). In certain Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās (see Rastelli 2006: 193-195), though pointedly not in the ĀP, it is quite clearly stated that followers of the Ekāyanaśākhā do *not* undergo *dīkṣā*. In addition, elsewhere in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature (see, for instance, PādS cp 21.17c-21b) it is claimed that only Mantrasiddhāntins (viz. followers of the Vājasaneyasaṅgha) are qualified to perform rituals “for the sake of others” (*parārtha*).

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, PādS cp 1.3-9; PārS 9.152-153b: *iti svārthāvirodhena parārthādhikṛtasya tu / ekāyanasya viduṣaḥ proktāḥ kālāḥ krameṇa tu // tathā vai dīkṣitasyāpi siddhāntaratacetasāḥ /*; and also ĪS 21.511-512b: *svārthasyāpi parārthasya pūjāyām adhikāriṇaḥ / śāṇḍilyādyanvaye jātā guror labdhābhiṣecanāḥ // anye tu kevalaṃ svārthapūjane hy adhikāriṇaḥ /*. The following section (ĪS 21.513-558) unambiguously locates the “lineage of Śāṇḍilya etc.” within the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda.

whatsoever as to their identity.<sup>83</sup> Further to this, I can see no suggestion, in either the ĀP or the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, that those Bhāgavatas who Yāmuna claims “perform *pūjā* [only] for themselves” should be thought of as belonging only to the Vājasaneyasākhā. Having asserted that there are Bhāgavatas who perform *pūjā* only for themselves at ĀP 155.2, Yāmuna then goes on to defend the professional priests, saying nothing more of the former group. When distinctions between the two *sākhās* are admitted at ĀP 169.3ff, Yāmuna mentions neither *parārthapūjā* nor *svārthapūjā*. It should, for the sake of clarity, be added here that the *pañcakālīka* rites, performed by members of both recensions, are *svārthapūjā*.

I have dwelt on these issues because I think that to interpret Yāmuna as distinguishing between the Vājasaneyasākhā and the Ekāyanaśākhā in such an explicit manner is to overlook the significant fact that it is only at the very end of the ĀP (at 169.3ff), in other words at a stage in the debate when the author is confident that his opponents have already been defeated, that he concedes for the first time that there are differences in the ritual practices adopted by the followers of the two *sākhās*. Until this point, although he has divided the *pañcakālīka* Brahmins into *parārthapūjākas* and *svārthapūjākas*, Yāmuna has presented the Pāñcarātra as very much a single and homogeneous ritualistic tradition. Thus we find references, for example, to “the path prescribed by the Pāñcarātra system” (*pañcarātratantravīhitamārgeṇa*, ĀP 139.6), and to “the sacrament of initiation established by the Pāñcarātra” (*pañcarātrasiddhādīkṣāsaṃskāra*, ĀP 158.1). Other than at ĀP 88.5ff, where the Ekāyanaśākhā is said to be in conformity with the Veda, each of the *sākhās* are mentioned only twice by Yāmuna prior to ĀP 169.3, and on both occasions it is their commonality, rather than their differences, that are highlighted. The passages in question read as follows:

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<sup>83</sup> Although at ĀP 169-170 the author distinguishes between the ritual practices of the Vājasaneyins and the Ekāyanas, he says nothing here which should exclude the Ekāyanas from acting as professional priests. It is true that at ĀP 170.6 the Ekāyanas are characterised as *mumuksus*, but this need not disqualify them - on this point see e.g. ĪS 21.506-508 and, more generally, Brunner (1990), who provides a clear account of the distinctions between *svārtha*- and *parārthapūjā*. The same would apply of course if we accept Young’s (2007: 238-239) reading that ‘Ekāyana’ here denotes ‘Bhāgavata’ in general (and elsewhere, at ĀP 91.1-6, Yāmuna *does* imply that the Pāñcarātra tradition *in toto* is concerned only with *mokṣa*).

*atha bhāgavatajanaparigrhātātvaḥ iti hetuḥ hanta tarhi tatparigrhātātvaḥ vājasaneyakaikāyanaśākhāvacasāṃ pratyakṣādīnāṃ cāprāmāṇyaprasaṅgaḥ* / - “Moreover, as to the argument [that the Pāñcarātra is invalid] “because it is accepted by the Bhāgavatas”, well in that case the [scriptural] statements of the Vājasaneyaka and Ekāyana śākhās and [the means of knowledge] perception etc. are also invalid, because they are accepted [by the Bhāgavatas] too!” (ĀP 140.5-7)

*iha vā kim aharahar adhīyamānavājasaneyakaikāyanaśākhān vilasadupa-vītottarīyaśikhāśālino 'dhyāpayato yājayataḥ pratigrhṇato viduṣaḥ paśyanto brāhmaṇā iti nāvayanti* / - “And in this case also, when [people] see learned men who study the Vājasaneyaka and Ekāyana śākhās daily, who wear their clearly visible sacred threads, upper garments and hair-tufts, who teach and sacrifice and accept gifts, do they not consider them to be Brahmins? (ĀP 141.8-10)

If it is reasonable to interpret these representations of the Vājasaneyaka and Ekāyana śākhās as being deliberately general or, as it were, “non-sectarian”, we might also see evidence of this generalising tendency in Yāmuna’s presentation of ‘Sātvata’, ‘Pāñcarātra’, and ‘Bhāgavata’ as synonymous terms. As Colas (2003: 234, 239) has demonstrated, in much of the earlier literature that is external (like the ĀP) to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, the terms ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pāñcarātra’ in particular refer to distinguishable groups.<sup>84</sup> A notable exception here is provided by Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s *Āgamaḍambara* (Āḍ), written in Kashmir during the reign of Śaṅkaravarman (i.e. 883-902 CE). In this play, which also endeavours to defend the orthodoxy of the Pāñcarātra, ‘Bhāgavata’ (Āḍ 4.11), ‘Sātvata’ (Āḍ 4.19) and ‘Pāñcarātrika’ (Āḍ 4.25) are all used interchangeably to refer to the same religious group (Dezső 2005: 197, 203).

I do not need to repeat here in detail the arguments of Colas (ibid.) and a number of other scholars (e.g. Inden 2000) – namely, that the term ‘Bhāgavata’ referred, at least during the period of the 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, primarily to “householder” or to

<sup>84</sup> This is the case in such diverse texts as Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* (a seventh century work, the eighth chapter of which clearly presents Bhāgavatas and Pāñcarātrikas as distinct groups), a ninth century Cambodian stele inscription at Prasat Komnap (K. 701, wherein ‘Bhāgavata’, ‘Pāñcarātra’, and ‘Sātvata’ are named as three Vaiṣṇava denominations), and a number of *circa* tenth century Vaikhāṇasa texts (wherein ‘Bhāgavatas’ and ‘Pāñcarātrikas’ are clearly set apart). This information is from Colas (2003). As Bakker (1997) and Willis (2009) have argued, the Sātvatas were themselves very likely a “strand” within a broader Bhāgavata cult, which points to the fact that the designation ‘Bhāgavata’ functioned as a general, overarching term as well as a specific one.

“aristocratic” Vaiṣṇavas who adhered to the Vedic sacrificial liturgy and were thus distinct from followers of the Pāñcarātra tradition which, as depicted in the early (c. fourth-fifth century CE)<sup>85</sup> Vaiṣṇava text the *Nārāyaṇīya*, tended to, in the words of Colas (2003: 234), “subordinate Vedic rituals to its own renunciative ideology”. If we concur with Inden’s (2000: 66) reading of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VDhP), we might consider this work as perhaps one of the earliest extant texts to provide a precedent for Yāmuna’s strategy of collapsing the traditional distinctions between ‘Pāñcarātrika’ and ‘Bhāgavata’. However the dating of the VDhP is notoriously difficult.<sup>86</sup>

Turning to the early Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās themselves, the Bhāgavatas are barely mentioned at all in the JS, SS and PauṣS.<sup>87</sup> However, two later works which are quoted by Yāmuna in his ĀP, namely the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS) and the SanS, do employ the designation ‘Bhāgavata’ to refer to followers of the Pāñcarātra. In the case of the ParS, the majority of the passages in which the term ‘Bhāgavata’ is used to denote ‘Pāñcarātrika’ belong to sections of the text which Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003) has identified as having been inserted or “re-worked” by a later redactor.<sup>88</sup> However, in several instances, portions which apparently belong to the older “ritualistic corpus” also contain this use of the term ‘Bhāgavata’.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile the

<sup>85</sup> See Schreiner (1997a: 1) for these dates. According to Oberlies (1997: 86), the oldest sections of the *Nārāyaṇīya* (chapters 321-326) most likely belong to the period 200-300 CE. Hildebrandt (2006), it should be noted, rejects these arguments and favours substantially earlier dates for the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and indeed the MBh as a whole.

<sup>86</sup> See for example Shah (1958), Rocher (1986), and Lubotsky (1996). Both Kane (1962) and Inden (2000) put forward the conservative dates 600-1000 CE.

<sup>87</sup> The term *bhāgavata* occurs three times in the PauṣS, at 8.136, 36.409, and 38.42, though there is no indication in any of these passages that it should be taken as synonymous with Pāñcarātrika. The term appears once in the JS in the verse-heading at 22.3, where the five kinds of Vaiṣṇava – Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānasa, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin – are referred to as those who are “exclusively devoted to the Bhāgavata *dharma*”, and it does not occur at all in the SS.

<sup>88</sup> Interpolated passages which equate ‘Bhāgavata’ with ‘Pāñcarātrika’ include ParS 3.36, 38, 57, 69-70; 27.30; 30.71, 123. It is very difficult to say when these and other similar passages were added to the ParS.

<sup>89</sup> The most striking of these is at ParS 4.57-58: *etad vīraavidhir hy eṣaḥ saṃkṣepāt kathito mayā / iṣṭvaiva paramātmānaṃ nityaṃ bhāgavataś śuciḥ // sarvapāpaviśuddhātmā muktimārgaṃ prapadyate / labhate cepsitān kāmān ihāmutra ca sarvaśaḥ //*. See also ParS 18.30, 19.53 and 25.23.

SanS unambiguously equates Bhāgavatas with Sāttvatas, Vaiṣṇavas and Pāñcarātrikas.<sup>90</sup>

Why, specifically, should Yāmuna seek to present the designations ‘Pāñcarātra’ and ‘Bhāgavata’ as synonymous? And why should the success of his defence of the Pāñcarātra be facilitated by his description of it as a single, homogeneous ritualistic tradition? To answer these questions it is helpful to look at the *Pādmasaṃhitā*, a text which was composed in South India some time after the ĀP.<sup>91</sup>

iii.) *The four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas according to the Pādmasaṃhitā*

The *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS) attempts to clearly delineate the divisions within the Pāñcarātra, while still preserving the “inclusivist” approach fostered by Yāmuna. It is one of several Saṃhitās which divides the Pāñcarātra tradition into four ‘Siddhāntas’, the others being the PauṣS (38.293-307b), the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (19.522-544), the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (21.560-586), the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* (16.31c-35b), the *Bhārgavatāntra* (22.87-94b) and, according to Vedāntadeśika, the *Hayagrīvasaṃhitā* (see PRR 8.5-8), the *Kālottara* (PRR 31.14-18), and the *Śrīkarasaṃhitā* (PRR 30.18ff).<sup>92</sup> Since Rastelli

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<sup>90</sup> SanS *Indrarātra* 3.81c-82: *kecit tāt sātṭvatāt āhuḥ kecid bhāgavatāt viduḥ // kecid ca vaiṣṇavāt āhuḥ kecit tāt pāñcarātrikāt / iti nāmnā tu bhedenā dīkṣitā vaiṣṇavāḥ smṛtāḥ //*

<sup>91</sup> As outlined above, on the basis of Rastelli’s (2003) chronology, I place the PādS in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century at the latest.

<sup>92</sup> Smith (1975: 296) convincingly suggests that the passage in the PauṣS which deals with the Siddhāntas is part of a later interpolation. Rastelli (2006: 190-191) suggests that we can assign its composition and inclusion within the PauṣS to a period prior to the composition of the PārS. The ‘*Hayagrīvasaṃhitā*’, quoted by Vedāntadeśika, is another name for the *Hayaśīrṣapāñcarātra* (Schrader 1916: 11; Gonda 1977: 106). This work, which is not available to me, appears to have its origins in North India (Rastelli 2007: 190). Several scholars (e.g. Rajan 1981: 34) favour an early date, perhaps as early as the ninth century. However, since there is no mention of the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas in any other works dating from this period, or indeed from quite a lengthy period subsequent to this, we can suppose that this passage was also probably part of a later interpolation into the text. The ‘*Kālottara*’ referred to by Vedāntadeśika is listed by Parampushdas and Shrutiprakashdas (2002: 83), under “Unpublished Saṃhitās”, as the ‘(Śrī) Kālottara-Saṃhitā’. Such a title does not appear in any “canonical” list given in a Saṃhitā. Each of the works listed above names the same four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas with the exceptions of the PauṣS (32.35b, 38.293c-294c) which calls what is elsewhere known as ‘Āgasasiddhānta’ simply ‘Siddhānta’ and, according to Vedāntadeśika, the *Śrīkarasaṃhitā*. This latter work refers to the four Siddhāntas as the ‘Vedasiddhānta’, the ‘Divyasiddhānta’, the ‘Tantrasiddhānta’, and the ‘Purāṇasiddhānta’. As far as I am aware, such a classification is not found in

(2006) has provided a thorough description of the accounts of these Siddhāntas in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature, I will limit myself here to a discussion of those broadly “sectarian” or inclusivist portrayals of the Pāñcarātra in the PādS which I believe can contribute towards our understanding of the internal divisions in the Pāñcarātra as encountered and presented by Yāmuna.

In the opening *adhyāya* of the PādS, after a brief eulogy in which the Pāñcarātra’s place among other teachings (*śāstra*) is likened to the place of the Ganges among other sacred bathing places (*tīrtha*), and of Acyuta among other gods (PādS *jp* 1.63c-64b), and in which there are references to the injunctions (*vidhi*) “of the Pāñcarātra” (1.64c, 69a), and to the Pāñcarātra as a teaching which rescues one “from the ocean of existence” (*bhavasāgarāt*) (1.75-76b), the author states the following:

*ṛgādi saṃjñayā vedaś caturdhā bhidyate yathā // tadvat siddhāntabhedena pañcarātraṃ caturvidham / ṛgādayo yathā caikaṃ bhidyate bahuśākhyayā // tathā siddhāntam ekaikaṃ vaktṛbhedena bhidyate /* – “Just as the Veda is divided into four parts with the names Ṛc etc., so too is the Pāñcarātra fourfold, with separate Siddhāntas. And just as the Ṛc and others are divided into many branches, similarly each Siddhānta is divided by [its having] different speakers.” (PādS *jp* 1.76c-78b)

Here, then, we see an apparently early attempt to present the divisions within the Pāñcarātra as being homologous with the four Vedas.<sup>93</sup> The term *siddhānta* which ordinarily means “settled opinion or doctrine” (Monier-Williams 2002: 1216) is explained in the PādS by means of a process of “semantic analysis” (*nirvacana*):

*siddhāntam nāma cānvarthaṃ nirāhur iti paṇḍitāḥ // mīmāṃsādiṣu śāstreṣu ye siddhārthā manīṣiṇaḥ / teṣāṃ ante ’dhikāro ’smin iti siddhāntasaṃjñitam //* – “Scholars have explained the name *siddhānta* in accordance with its meaning: herein lies the authority of those learned ones who, with regard to the ultimate (*ante*), have accomplished (*siddha*) their goal in teachings such as Mīmāṃsā etc. Thus it is called *siddhānta*.” (PādS *jp* 1.78c-79)<sup>94</sup>

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any other extant work. A ‘Śrīkara’ is listed in the PādS (*jp* 1.102b), the *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* (2.18d and 24c), and, according to Schrader (1916: 11), the *Viṣṇutantra*.

<sup>93</sup> Vedāntadeśika would later use the same strategy in his PRR (e.g. 3.10-12), a text which quotes the PādS a number of times.

<sup>94</sup> Verse 1.79 is repeated at PādS *cp* 19.110c-111b. There are similar explanations of the term *siddhānta* in both the PauS (38.305-307b) and the PārS (19.544).

PādS *jp* 1.80-82 names the four Siddhāntas as ‘Mantra’, ‘Āgama’, ‘Tantra’, and ‘Tantrāntara’. At *jp* 1.86cd, the PādS claims that it belongs to the Mantrasiddhānta. This Siddhānta, the author tells us elsewhere (*cp* 19.115d), is “foremost” (*agrimam*). Mantrasiddhāntins primarily worship a single form of god (*ekamūrti*, *jp* 1.80ab), which we are told (at *cp* 21.25c) is Vāsudeva.<sup>95</sup> The author asserts (*cp* 21.28c-29) that Mantrasiddhāntins “should meditate on” or “visualise” (*dhyāyeyuḥ*, 29c) and honour Vāsudeva’s image (*bera*) with Vedic mantras (*trayīmantra*). The Vedic origin of the Mantrasiddhānta is described at PādS *cp* 21.2ff. Here we are told that a group of 8000 seers (*ṛṣi*), led by Aupagāyana and belonging to the Kāṇva and Mādhyandina recensions (i.e. of the Vājasaneyya school) asked Brahmā for a means to liberation, and in response to this, Brahmā, “desiring to grant favours” (*anugrahaḥkāmyayā*), initiated these seers into the Pañcarātra “by way of the Mantrasiddhānta” (PādS *cp* 21.7c-8). Having been initiated into the *cakravārija maṇḍala* (also known as the *cakrābja maṇḍala*), the *ṛṣi*s are instructed to recite the Kāṇvī and Mādhyandinī recensions (*śākhā*), and to accompany the performance of Vedic rituals such as *somayāga* with visualisation on (*dhyāna*) and worship of the Lord (*bhagavat*) (PādS *cp* 21.10c-11b). The Mantrasiddhānta, “like the Veda”, teaches that performing the ritual as a duty (*kartavya*), in other words as something that is “without fruit”, leads to supreme bliss.<sup>96</sup> We are told in the following verse that this (potentially) liberation-conferring ritual is “the worship of the Lord (*bhagavat*) according to the five times teaching” which is “to be performed either at home or in the temple”.<sup>97</sup>

The author of the PādS then tells us that Mantrasiddhāntins are those who are born into the lineage (*vaṃśa*) of Bhagavat worshippers founded by these original Vājasaneyin seers, and that it is for this reason that they are called ‘Bhāgavatas’. Once these Bhāgavatas have themselves been properly initiated, they are also qualified to

<sup>95</sup> As Rastelli (2006: 224-225) shows, according to PārS 19.529-539 the Mantrasiddhāntins do not always worship god as a “single form”, they also worship him in his *vyūha* and *vibhava* forms. This is merely one example of conflicting (“internal”/“external”) descriptions across texts which belong to different Siddhāntas.

<sup>96</sup> PādS *cp* 21.11c-12: *kartavyatvena vedoktaṃ ity evaṃ phalavarjitam // kartavyam iti kurvāṇaiḥ karma niśśreyasaṃ param / prāpyate 'nena yuṣmābhir mantrasiddhāntavartmanā //*. Cf. PauS 36.260c-261, wherein worshipping Viṣṇu “as a duty... [that is] without fruit” is associated, contrarily, with the Ekāyana Brahmins (*vīpra*).

<sup>97</sup> PādS *cp* 21.13ac: *pañcakālāṃ yathāśāstraṃ [corr. yathāśāstra] gr̥he vā mandire 'pi vā / bhagavatpūjanaṃ kāryam... //*.



perform the ritual worship of Viṣṇu in accordance with the “five times”.<sup>98</sup> It is further stated (at *cp* 21.17c-21b) that only Bhāgavatas can perform worship for the sake of others (*parārthayajana*), though this rule is then immediately revised to enable an initiated non-Bhāgavata to do so if commanded to by a Bhāgavata.<sup>99</sup> It is notable that the author of this section of the PādS holds ‘Bhāgavatas’ in very high regard,<sup>100</sup> and that in equating Bhāgavatas with Mantrasiddhāntins, he is equating them with Pāñcarātriśa Brahmins who also perform Vedic rites.

This account of the Mantrasiddhānta is followed by a description of the Āgamasiddhānta. We have been told previously (PādS *jp* 1.80cd, *cp* 19.116-117) that members of this Siddhānta favour worshipping the four forms (*caturmūrti*) of god, namely the Vyūhas Vāsudeva and so on. The author of this section of the PādS clearly regards the Āgamasiddhānta as an inferior tradition, and its inferiority is conveyed by the fact that its members do not undergo initiation (*dīkṣā*, see PādS *cp* 1.3-5b, 21.53),<sup>101</sup> and are therefore not qualified to perform certain rites. These include the investiture of god’s icon with the sacred thread (*pavitṛāropaṇa*), and the rites relating to the construction of temples (*karṣaṇādi*) and the installation of divine images therein (*pratiṣṭhā*) (PādS *cp* 21.33-35b, 43-46). Tellingly, it is said that an Āgamasiddhāntin should ask a Brahmin who has been initiated into the Mantrasiddhānta to perform these latter rites.<sup>102</sup> Unsurprisingly, as we will see below, Āgamasiddhāntins present a rather different picture, and claim that they *are* qualified to perform the rites relating to *pavitṛāropaṇa* and *pratiṣṭhā*.

<sup>98</sup> PādS *cp* 21.14-15: *yūyaṃ bhāgavatās tena jātā bhagavadarcanāt / bhagavadbhaktikaraṇād vaṃśa-jātāś caturmukha // nāmnā bhāgavatāḥ santo dīkṣayitvā yathāvidhi / yathoktaṃ karma kurvāṇāḥ prāpnuvanti param padam //*. This understanding of the Bhāgavatas as belonging to a lineage that one is born into is also found in the *Nārādīyaśaṃhita* at 11.24ab: *bhagavadvaṃśajātāḥ ye te vai bhāgavatāḥ smṛtāḥ /*.

<sup>99</sup> This immediate revision possibly indicates that the second, more moderate “rule” was incorporated into the text at a later time.

<sup>100</sup> See especially PādS *cp* 21.21c-22: *bhagavān eva govinda sākṣād bhāgavatāḥ smṛtāḥ // taṃ drṣṭvā vidyayā dīnam api duṣkṛtakāriṇam / nirguṇaṃ guṇinaṃ vāpi pratyuttiṣṭhet kṛtāñjaliḥ /*.

<sup>101</sup> The PārS, which does not describe the initiation rite, also appears to confirm (at e.g. 9.187-190, 13.114c-115, 15.14c-20, 18.116-117) that Āgamasiddhāntins do not undergo *dīkṣā*. This information is taken from Rastelli (2006: 193-195).

<sup>102</sup> PādS *cp* 21.45: *yāceta mantrasiddhānte dīkṣitaṃ viprasattamam / pūjārtham ātmano bimbapṛatiṣṭhākaraṣaṇādiṣu (corr. karaṇādiṣu) //*.

Both passages that discuss the omission of *dīkṣā* refer to an ‘Ekāyana’; in the first instance to an *ekāyanam vedam* (PādS cp 1.3c), and in the second instance to an *ekāyanādhvan* (PādS cp 21.53d). This ‘Ekāyanaveda’ or “way of the Ekāyana” is the ritual teaching to which members of the Āgamasiddhānta adhere.<sup>103</sup> However, despite the fact that his teaching bears the affix *veda*, according to the PādS (cp 21.37c-39b) the Pāñcarātrika ‘Ekāyana’ (this designation is shown to be synonymous with ‘Āgamasiddhāntin’ at PādS cp 21.47ab), in contrast to the Mantrasiddhāntin is not permitted to use Vedic mantras, and recites the *dvādaśākṣara* mantra without the elements *bīja*, *śakti*, *aṅga*, *ṛṣi* and *chandas*.<sup>104</sup> Further manifestly non-Vedic characteristics of this Siddhānta include the fact that its followers are not members of a Brahminical lineage (*gotra*, PādS cp 21.41ab), and that the “leading rite” or the “rite of guidance” (*nayakarman*) undertaken according to the *ekādhvan* is enjoined for all four *varṇas*, rather than only for the highest three (PādS cp 21.36c-37b). It is not clear what this *nayakarman* refers to, though it appears to be one of the life-cycle rites (*saṃskāra*) undertaken by Ekāyanas since it is mentioned in that context.<sup>105</sup>

In spite of the clear deficiencies or limitations of the Ekāyana in the eyes of the more Veda-congruent Mantrasiddhāntin author of this section of the PādS, however, it is important to recognise that the followers of this “lesser” Siddhānta, and equally the followers of the other Siddhāntas, the Tantra and Tantrāntara, are accepted nonetheless as genuine Pāñcarātrikas. The Tantrasiddhānta is described in the PādS as having several characteristics in common with the Āgamasiddhānta. For instance, it accepts members of all four social classes (PādS cp 21.55), and its adherents are said to have abandoned the Veda, and to perform the life-cycle rites (*saṃskāra*) in accordance with their own Tantra (PādS cp 21.56). Tantrasiddhāntins are said to

<sup>103</sup> PādS cp 21.36cd (→ BhT 24.19cd) refers to *ekādhvan* as the tradition according to which the *saṃskāras* are performed in the Āgamasiddhānta. It seems reasonable, in light of line 53cd referred to above, to take this as a synonym for *ekāyanādhvan*. At PādS cp 21.47ab it is stated: *ekāyanas caturmūrtim pratigṛhya samarcayet* / – “The Ekāyana should worship having accepted the fourfold form”.

<sup>104</sup> See the parallel verses at BhT 24.20, 26c-27b). As Hanneder (1997) and Rastelli (2006) have shown, these last two elements serve to make Tantric mantras seem more Vedic. The Mantrasiddhānta as presented in the PādS incorporate these elements, whereas the Āgamasiddhānta does not. Rastelli (2006: 208) writes, “Es paßt sehr gut zu der PādS, deren Anhänger sich selbst auf vedisch-orthodoxe Traditionen zurückführen und die ihr Ritual als viṣṇuitische Modifikation des vedisch-orthodoxen Rituals betrachten, daß sie die “vedischen” und die “tantrischen” Elemente eines Mantra lehrt.”

<sup>105</sup> See the discussion of this verse in Rastelli (2006: 196-197).

worship nine forms of god (PādS cp 21.59-66). Members of the Tantrāntarasiddhānta, meanwhile, may also belong to any of the four social classes, and are said to worship images of god with three, four or more faces, surrounded by attendant deities (*parivāra*), and to perform the life-cycle rites in accordance with the Tantrāntara path (*mārga*) and the Veda (PādS cp 21.70-73b).

The four Siddhāntas, then, are accepted by the PādS as distinct branches of a single tradition. Consequently the many eulogies to the ‘Pāñcarātra’ in general which are found throughout this work are not intended to honour merely the Mantrasiddhānta, rather they honour all four Siddhāntas together as the aggregate ‘Pāñcarātra’. And, while, for instance, the Āgamasiddhāntin or Ekāyana is depicted as being prohibited from performing certain rites, he is nonetheless shown to perform the quintessentially Pāñcarātrika rite of worshipping Viṣṇu in accordance with the five times (*pañcakāla*).<sup>106</sup> Elsewhere in the PādS, we encounter the following emphatically inclusive statement:

*sūriḥ suhr̥d bhāgavataḥ sāttvataḥ pañcakālavit // aikāntikas tanmayaś ca pāñcarātrika ity api / evamādibhir ākhyābhir ākhyeyaḥ kamalāsana //* - “Sage, friend, Bhāgavata, Sāttvata, knower of the five times, Aikāntika, Tanmaya and also Pāñcarātrika - [he] is called by names such as these, O Kamalāsana.” (PādS cp 2.87c-88)<sup>107</sup>

It is unlikely that the author of this verse is the same as the author of the descriptions of the Mantra and Āgama Siddhāntas summarised above, for there the designation ‘Bhāgavata’ clearly refers only to a follower of the Mantrasiddhānta, and not to Pāñcarātrikas in general. The inclusivism conveyed in this verse may indicate its later composition for, as we will see below, such strategies are increasingly evident among the later scriptural works. This verse is of interest here because it includes the terms ‘Aikāntika’ and ‘Tanmaya’ as synonyms of ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pāñcarātrika’. The term *aikāntika* is derived from the word *ekānta* which, along with its derivatives, is prominent in the *Nārāyaṇīya* and throughout much of the Pāñcarātra scriptural

<sup>106</sup> See PādS cp 21.34c-35b, and also the following verse 35c-36b: *nirāśaiḥ karmasaṃnyāsakāribhir devapūjanam // balādimantrair acchidrapañcakālaparāyaṇaiḥ /*

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* 9.89c-90: *sa eva brāhmaṇo vidvān sa evāśramiṇāṃ varaḥ // sa etair nāmabhir vācya ekāntī pāñcarātrikaḥ / sūrir bhāgavataś caiva sāttvataḥ pañcakālikaḥ //*

literature (see Matsubara 1994: 51-59). Scholars have long considered one such derivative, *ekāntin*, to mean something like “monotheist” in a Pāñcarātra context (e.g. *ibid.*, and Gonda 1977) but, as we will see below, this term can also designate “one who has a single goal” viz. liberation. That the term *aikāntika* can similarly denote “liberation as the single goal” is indicated in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (5.22-23b), wherein the “Aikāntika path” (*aikāntikaṃ mārgam*) is said to lead to “the fruit” (*phalam*) of attaining to the Bhagavat (*bhagavatprāpti*). Although the PādS (*cp* 21.11c-12) claims that the way of the Mantrasiddhānta leads to “ultimate bliss” (*niśśreyasam*) and that its worship of god is “without [worldly] fruit” (*phalavarjitam*), the characteristic of having liberation as the only goal is far more commonly associated with the Āgamasiddhānta or Ekāyana tradition. This is attested to in the ĀP (170.3ff), the PādS (*cp* 21.35cd, 42), the PārS (10.145cd), the *Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra* (HP) as quoted by Vedāntadeśika (PRR 8.5-8), and also the PRR (9.13-10.2) itself.

In other words, the reference to ‘Aikāntika’ in the passage quoted above (PādS *cp* 2.87c-88) very likely denotes a follower of the Ekāyana tradition. Moreover, we can assume that ‘Tanmaya’ is also used to denote a follower of this tradition, since elsewhere in the PādS’s Caryāpāda the Tanmayas are instructed to recite mantras belonging to the Ekāyana recension (*śākhā*), while the “most excellent knowers of mantras” recite from the four Vedas.<sup>108</sup> The designation ‘Tanmaya’, meaning literally “[he who is] identical with that” or “[he who is] consisting of that”, is also used to refer to Ekāyanas in the SS (25.132) and the PauṣS (36.266b). In this passage of the PādS, then, as in Yāmuna’s ĀP, the Ekāyana is equated with the Brahmanical ‘Bhāgavata’. Similarly inclusivist tendencies are not infrequent in the PādS (and may belong, as I have suggested above, to later portions of the text). The tension between these passages and those more “sectarian” portions is resolved, in any case, through the presentation of a “fourfold” Pāñcarātra, conceived on the model of the Veda, in which all divisions and perceived hierarchies are ultimately transcended by the inclusive and uniquely Pāñcarātrika ritual act of Viṣṇu worship according to the “five times”.

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<sup>108</sup> PādS *cp* 11.242c-243b: *dikṣu vedāṃś ca caturaḥ paṭheyur mantravittamāḥ // vidikṣu ekāyanāṃ śākhāṃ tanmayās sumukhās tathā ।*

#### iv.) Conclusions

It will be useful, at this juncture, to tie together several summary conclusions from the foregoing. Firstly, the idea found in the PārS that three works, namely the SS, PauṣS and JS, are supreme among the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās is, in the context of the Pāñcarātra corpus *in toto*, a relatively late idea, probably no earlier than the twelfth century, and almost certainly originating in South India. The characterisation of these texts as the “three jewels” (*ratnatraya*) is later still, the earliest example being found in a work that is external to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, namely Vedāntadeśika’s PRR, composed in Śrīraṅgam during the first quarter of the fourteenth century. In addition, the absence in the earlier literature of the division of the Pāñcarātra tradition into four Siddhāntas<sup>109</sup> suggests that this too is a relatively late innovation, and the earliest extant articulations of this theory succeed several other works which also recognise the existence of distinct groups within the Pāñcarātra.<sup>110</sup> Among these we can list at least the *Haravijaya*, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s NPP, the SS, the SanS, the JS, a Vaikhānasa work called the *Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa*, and Yāmuna’s ĀP. The accounts of the different types of Vaiṣṇava or Pāñcarātrika contained in these texts are all markedly different from each other, but it is to be noted that none of them indicate that there was any sectarian animosity between these groups.

Yāmuna’s ĀP makes no reference to the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, and is certainly less “sectarian” in tone than sections of the PādS which I have addressed above. As Neevel (1977: 35-36) suggests, Yāmuna was very likely himself a member of a Pāñcarātra tradition that performed both Pāñcarātrika and Vedic rites. His inclusion of the followers of the Ekāyanaśākhā within the broad class of Bhāgavata Brahmins whom he is defending can possibly be explained by the fact that these Ekāyanas enjoyed a prominent position at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam

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<sup>109</sup> This is based on the assumption that the passage dealing with the four Siddhāntas in the *Hayagrīvasaṃhitā* (or the *Hayagrīvaṣaṃhitā*) that is quoted by Vedāntadeśika (PRR 8.5-8) was a late interpolation into that text.

<sup>110</sup> The earliest extant “articulation” of the theory of four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas may well occur in the section of the PauṣS (38.295-39.39) which Smith (1975: 296) has identified as a late interpolation. Dating the inclusion of this section within the PauṣS is no easy task, but I am assuming that it came after Yāmuna’s composition of the ĀP on the basis that both events probably occurred in Śrīraṅgam, where the PauṣS was in use, and the ĀP makes no mention of the Siddhāntas.

at which Yāmuna was an *ācārya*.<sup>111</sup> It is clear, at any rate, that Yāmuna did not oppose this tradition. He asserts that its members do not lose their Brahminical status through abandoning the *dharma* of the triple Veda and performing their own life-cycle rites (*saṁskāra*),<sup>112</sup> and we must assume that he accepted the “non-personal status” or “authorlessness” (*apauruṣeyatvam*) of the Ekāyanaśākhā, even if he did not, as some scholars have alleged, author the *Kāśmīrāgamaprāmāṇya*, in which this status is purportedly “treated at length.”<sup>113</sup> We should also bear in mind that Yāmuna’s chief objective in the ĀP was not to provide a description of the distinguishable “groups” within the Pāñcarātra, but to respond convincingly to a number of allegations cast against the orthopraxy of that tradition. By presenting the Pāñcarātra as a homogeneous ritualistic tradition,<sup>114</sup> and the designations ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pañcarātra’ as synonymous, Yāmuna is thereby subsuming the least “orthoprax” Pāñcarātrikas (i.e. the Ekāyanas) into the most orthoprax or Veda-congruent stream (the Vājasaneyins or Bhāgavatas) and, at least until the very end of the ĀP, presenting the latter group as representative of the Pāñcarātra in general.

The objective of the author of the description of the Siddhāntas in the PādS is different. His delineation of the divisions within the Pāñcarātra is accompanied by a warning against “mixing” (*sāṅkarya/saṅkara*) one Siddhānta with another.<sup>115</sup> Rastelli (2006: 186-187) draws attention to the fact that the warnings against “mixing” Siddhāntas which are found in the 19<sup>th</sup> *adhyāyas* of both the PādS’s Caryāpāda and the PārS are contained within sections of these texts which deal primarily with the rites of reparation (*prāyaścitta*). Given that such rites are also prescribed, for instance, in the event of a *tantrasāṅkarya* i.e a “mixing” of *systems*, whether it be Vaikhānasa or Pāśupata (PārS 19.520, 549), the term “sectarianism” does not seem too out of place in a discussion of the Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas of this period. Indeed, the PādS (*cp*

<sup>111</sup> Rastelli (2006) has shown that the partially Ekāyana PauṣS was in use at this temple, and that the PārS, an Ekāyana work, was very probably composed here.

<sup>112</sup> ĀP 169.7-10: *ye punaḥ sāvītryanuvacanaprabhṛttrayīdharmatyāgena ekāyanaśrutivihitān eva cattvāriṁśat saṁskārān kurvate te 'pi svaśākhāgrhyoktam arthaṁ yathāvad anuṣṭhāmanāḥ na śākhāntarīyakarmānanuṣṭhānād brāhmaṇyāt pracyavante.*

<sup>113</sup> Yāmuna gives no clear indication in the ĀP that he authored this work. See ĀP 170.7-9: *yathā ca ekāyanaśākhāyā apauruṣeyatvaṁ tathā kāśmīrāgamaprāmāṇya eva prapañcitam iti.*

<sup>114</sup> See, for example, Yāmuna’s claim (at ĀP 115.8-116.1) that “Mutual conflict between the [Pāñcarātra] Tantras... does not exist” (*parasparavipratīṣedhas tu... tantrāṇāṁ nāsty eva*).

<sup>115</sup> See especially PādS *jp* 1.84-85, *cp* 19.123ff, and also *cp* 21.73cff.

19.125c<sup>ff</sup>) explicitly states the equivalence between a *siddhāntasaṅkara* and a *tantrasaṅkara*.

However, as we have seen, the warning against the mixing of Siddhāntas (intended presumably solely for the benefit of Pāñcarātriḥ adepts), and the descriptions of the divisions themselves, are presented in the PādS as we now possess it alongside a number of passages (intended perhaps for the Pāñcarātriḥ's opponents as well), in which these divisions are transcended, and in which the Pāñcarātriḥ is shown to be a single, homogeneous tradition in a manner comparable to the "tradition" of the Veda. Of course, this depiction of a unified tradition with distinct branches is able to account for internal inconsistencies in the scriptural literature. The depiction of unity is aided in the PādS, as it is in several later Saṃhitās, via the presentation of a "Pāñcarātriḥ canon", and it is this theme, alongside that of the classification of a hierarchy of scriptures, to which I turn next.

### 3. The Formation of the Pāñcarātra Canon

#### i.) Classifications of scripture in the Pārameśvarasaṃhitā and the Pādmasaṃhitā

In this chapter I address the textual evidence which points to the formation of the Pāñcarātra canon as being the outcome of the decline of the sectarian culture I have referred to above. In this first part, I compare the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*'s (PārS) relatively early attempt to establish a scriptural canon with the substantially different approach to canon-formation that is found in the PādS.

As we have seen in Chapter One, both the PārS and the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS) employ a classificatory scheme in which the Pāñcarātra scriptures are divided into three groups, namely the celestial teachings (*divyaśāstra*), the teachings of sages (*munibhāṣitaśāstra*), and the teachings of men (*pauruṣaśāstra*).<sup>116</sup> An earlier formulation of this scheme can be found in the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS):

*tatra vai trividhaṃ vākyaṃ divyaṃ ca munibhāṣitam // pauruṣaṃ cāravindākṣa  
tadbhedam avadhāraya / yad arthāḍhyam asandigdhaṃ svaccham alpākṣaraṃ  
sthiram // tat pārameśvaraṃ vākyaṃ ājñāsiddhaṃ ca mokṣadam /  
praśaṃsakaṃ vai siddhīnāṃ sampravartakam apy atha // sarveṣāṃ rañjakaṃ  
gūḍhaṃ niścayīkaraṇakṣamaṃ / munivākyaṃ tu tad viddhi  
caturvargaphalapradam // anarthakam asambaddham alpārthaṃ  
śabdaḍambaram / anirvāhakam ādyokter vākyaṃ tat pauruṣaṃ smṛtam // heyam  
cānarthasiddhīnām ākaraṃ narakāvaham / prasiddhārthānūvādaṃ yat  
saṃgatārthaṃ vilakṣaṇam // api cet pauruṣaṃ vākyaṃ grāhyaṃ tan  
munivākyaavat / evam ādeyavākyaṃ ttha āgamo yo mahāmate //  
sanmārgadarśanaṃ kṛtsnaṃ vidhivādaṃ ca viddhi tam /.* – “There [i.e. in this  
system], there are three types of statement: [those which are] celestial, [those]  
spoken by sages, and [those with a] human origin, O Lotus-eyed one! Listen to the  
differences [between them]. That which is assuredly rich in significance  
(*arthāḍhyam*), which is clear, succinct, and reliable, *that* is a statement of the  
highest Lord, which has attained [the status of] a command, and which bestows

<sup>116</sup> It is worth pointing out the similarity of this scheme with that of the threefold “stream” or “flow” (*ogha*) of gurus that is named in such Śaiva Kaula works as the *Ciñcinīmatasārasamuccaya*, the *Kulārṇavatāntra*, and in Maheśvarānanda’s *Mahārthamañjarīparimala* as the “celestial stream” (*divyaugha*), the “perfected stream” (*siddhaugha*) and the “human stream” (*mānavaugha*). On the evidence of the relatively late composition of each of these works, it would appear that this Śaiva scheme postdates the threefold classification of texts found in the Pāñcarātra.



liberation. [That which] praises, as well as bestows, supernatural powers, which pleases everyone, which is esoteric (or “secretive”, *gūḍham*) [but is nonetheless] capable of evoking certainty (*niścayikaraṇakṣamam*), know that as a statement of the sages, which grants the group of four [i.e. the *puruṣārthas*] as its fruit. [That which is] meaningless, incoherent, has little purpose, is verbose, and which does not follow (literally “is non-accomplishing of”, *anirvāhakam*) the original [i.e. celestial] proclamation, that statement is known as [being of] human [origin]. [Such statements amount to] the accumulation of worthless powers, and are to be avoided [as] they lead to hell. [However], that which repeats well known axioms (*artha*), agrees in meaning [with the celestial statements], [and] has different attributes [to the aforementioned human statements], even if it is a human statement, is understood as being like a statement made by sages (*munivākyavat*). Thus, O wise one, know that scripture (*āgama*), which originates from statements which are appropriated [in this way], is an entire proclamation of law which reveals the correct path.” (SS 22.52c-59b)

In this context the designation “celestial” (*divyam*) indicates that the text is, quite literally, the “utterance” (or “statement”, *vākyam*) of God. The PārS informs us that the celestial teachings are “spoken” by Vāsudeva and then “circulated” by “[lesser gods] headed by Brahmā, Rudra and Indra”.<sup>117</sup> The same verses are contained in the ĪS (1.54-55), and they are also alluded to in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* (PRR 39.8ff), wherein Vedāntadeśika affirms that *divyam* means “directly established by God” (*sākṣād bhagavatpraṇītaḥ*). In the PārS (10.339c-345b) and the ĪS (1.57c-63b), the second group of scriptures (*munibhāṣitaśāstra*) is divided into *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa* works. This classification of texts according to the Sāṃkhyan theory of the three “strands” or dynamic tendencies (*guṇa*) inherent within the ground of materiality (*prakṛti*), is a strategy which is also encountered in the self-classification of certain Purāṇas.<sup>118</sup> According to the PārS (10.338-340b) and the ĪS (1.56-58b), although *sāttvika* texts are communicated by lesser gods and sages, they are established in accordance with the content (*arthajāla*) that is learnt directly from Viṣṇu (Puṇḍarikākṣa). Vedāntadeśika reiterates that this category of teaching is founded on the “bare narrative” that is heard directly from God.<sup>119</sup> The PārS (10.340c-344) teaches that a *rājasa* text is either partially based on this transmitted knowledge and

<sup>117</sup> PārS 10.336-337: *vāsudevena yat proktaṃ śāstraṃ bhagavatā svayam / anuṣṭupchandobandhena samāsavayāsabhedataḥ // tathaiva brahmarudrendrapramukhaiś ca pravartitam / lokeṣv api ca divyeṣu tad divyaṃ viddhi sattama //*

<sup>118</sup> See for example *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.68-69 and *Pāṇḍapurāṇa* 5.263.81-84 (information from Rocher 1986: 20).

<sup>119</sup> PRR 39.13-14: *sākṣād bhagavataḥ śrutārthamātranibandhanarūpaṃ śāstraṃ sāttvikam*.

partially on the author's own understanding (*svabuddhi*), or it is a summary (*saṃkṣepa*) of God's teaching "by Brahmā etc." (*brahmādibhiḥ*), or it is a summary, written by sages, of God's teaching *as learnt from* Brahmā etc. (*brahmādibhyaḥ*). There are two distinct types of *rājasa* text, namely Pāñcarātra and Vaikhāṇasa (see also ĪS 1.58c-62). A *tāmasa* text constitutes the thoughts (*svavikalpa*) of the sages alone (PārS 10.345ab, ĪS 1.63ab), while a *pauruṣaśāstra* is the creation of an ordinary person (*manuja*, PārS 10.345cd, ĪS 1.63cd).

Although the threefold (*divya*, *munibhāṣita*, *pauruṣa*) classification is already present in the SS, the PārS is, as far as I am aware, the only published Pāñcarātra text which grades specific scriptures according to this hierarchy. As outlined above, the SS, PauṣS and JS are the "celestial" scriptures. Among those that are "spoken by sages", the PārS counts itself alongside the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*,<sup>120</sup> the *Bharadvājasamhitā*, the *Saumantavī*, the *Vaiḥāyasīsamhitā*, "the teaching that originated with the Citraśikhaṇḍins" (named by Vedāntadeśika as the *Citraśikhaṇḍisamhitā* at PRR 40.4), and the *Jayottara* as *sāttvika* texts.<sup>121</sup> The *Sanatkumāra*, *Padmodbhava*, *Satyā*, *Tejodraviṇa* and *Māyāvaibhavika* are named as *rājasa* texts,<sup>122</sup> and the *Pañcapraśna*, *Śukapraśna* and *Tattvasāgarasaṃhitā* as *tāmasa* texts.<sup>123</sup> The "teachings of men" (*pauruṣaśāstra*) are not named. Meanwhile, it is said that a "mixing together" (*sāṅkaryam*) of these scriptures should be avoided (PārS 10.385cd, ĪS 23.33cd).

<sup>120</sup> As Smith (1975: 66) has pointed out, there is more than one Pāñcarātra text with this name. The *Īśvarasaṃhitā* listed here is very unlikely to be the extant, published ĪS.

<sup>121</sup> Rastelli (2006: 111) offers a variant reading of this passage, wherein the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, *Bharadvājasamhitā* and *Saumantavī* are included as *divya* alongside the SS, PauṣS and JS, and the PārS is not included at all: "Höre: Sātvata, Pauṣkara und Jayākhyā, (376cd) solchartige Śāstras sind göttlich (*divya*). Auch die *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, die *Bharadvājasamhitā*, (377) und die *Saumantavī* werden 'vom höchsten Herrscher stammend' (*pārameśvara*) genannt." My own reading is in agreement with that of Vedāntadeśika in his PRR (40.3-7): ... *sāttvatapauṣkarajayākhyādīni śāstrāṇi divyāni īśvarabhāradvājasaumantavapārameśvaravaiḥāyasacitraśikhaṇḍisamhitājayottarādīni sāttvikāni sanatkumārapadmodbhavaśātātapattejodraviṇamāyāvaibhavikādīni rājasāni pañcapraśna-śukapraśnatattvasāgarādīni tāmasānīti*...

<sup>122</sup> It is worth pointing out that the first two of these *rājasa* texts are among the "five jewels" enumerated at the end of the PādS (cp 33.204-205b) and discussed above.

<sup>123</sup> PārS 10.376c-382b: *sātvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyāṃ ca tathāiva ca // evamādīni śāstrāṇi divyānīty avadhāraya / saṃhitā ceśvarasyāpi bharadvājasya saṃhitā // saumantavī tathā hy etat pārameśvarasaṃjñitam / vaiḥāyasī saṃhitā ca śāstraṃ citraśikhaṇḍijam // tathā jayottaraṃ tatra evamādīni tattvataḥ / sāttvikāni vijānīhi munivākyāni sattama // tantraṃ sanatkumārakhyāṃ tathā padmodbhavābhīdam / satyāpi tejodraviṇaṃ māyāvaibhavikaṃ tathā // ityādīny avagacca tvam rājasāny eva tattvataḥ / pañcapraśnaṃ śukapraśnaṃ tattvasāgarasaṃhitā // ityādīny avabuddhyasva tāmasāni viśeṣataḥ /*

What can this hierarchy of texts tell us about the attitude towards scriptural authority in the PārS? To what extent does this categorisation conform to the way in which the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās are classified and enumerated in other Pāñcarātra works? To be sure, the threefold hierarchical scheme is borrowed from the SS, and was later incorporated from the PārS into the ĪS, but it is not found, as far as I am aware, in any other Pāñcarātra text. That the PārS grades specific scriptures according to this hierarchy is a significant development from the SS, which gives no obvious indication that it ranks itself among the “celestial” category. In a similar vein, the PārS’s characterisation of the JS is not derived from that work’s own self-description, for the present version of the JS, at least, contains a presentation of its own transmission which does not conform to the idea that it represents the *direct* revelation of God.<sup>124</sup>

As in the SS, the classificatory scheme in the PārS ostensibly grades a textual statement (*vākya*) according to the identity of its author, but this neat structure is then set aside with the allowance that a human statement can gain the status of one that is “spoken by sages” providing that its content conforms to that of the celestial statements.<sup>125</sup> This allowance reveals two key features of this system of classification. Firstly, it is clear that we are not dealing here with either a “complete” or a “closed” canon of works, since it is admitted that the *munibhāṣita* category is open to additions.<sup>126</sup> The “incompleteness” of the list of scriptures in the PārS is further

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<sup>124</sup> The opening *paṭala* of the JS begins with the sage Saṃvartaka approaching his father Aurva and asking him to tell of the means by which rebirth in *saṃsāra* can be avoided. In response, Aurva recites to Saṃvartaka a conversation between Nārada and God as he himself has heard it from Śāṇḍilya. However, Śāṇḍilya’s account of God’s teaching, learnt by Śāṇḍilya directly from Nārada, and repeated by Aurva to form the content of the Saṃhitā as we now possess it, is not a verbatim repetition of God’s utterances, but is rather an “abridgement” (*saṃkṣiptam*, JS 1.50a) of the same, in which only the “essence” (*sārabhūtam*) is selected for retelling (JS 1.74cd). Insofar as this abridgement has been performed by Śāṇḍilya himself, the dialogue between Nārada and God which begins at JS 2.31 and continues thereafter cannot be said to have been directly revealed by God. Indeed, according to its self-description as summarised here, the JS would fit better into the PārS’s category of *munibhāṣita* teachings of the *rājasa* type.

<sup>125</sup> PārS 10.373-374b: *sāttvikādikramāt teṣu samabhyūhya mahāmate / prasiddhārthān upādāya saṅgatārthaṃ vilakṣaṇam // api cet pauraṣaṃ vākyaṃ tan munivākyavat /*. See also SS 22.57c-58b, on which this is based.

<sup>126</sup> In this respect the delineation of the Pāñcarātra canon in the PārS does not conform to the somewhat limited definition of “canon” advanced by Jonathan Z. Smith in his influential essay *Sacred Persistance: Towards a Redescription of Canon*. Smith (1982: 48, 52) argues that “the element of

conveyed, as Rastelli (2006: 127) has pointed out, by the appendage of the terms “and so on, and so forth” (*evamādīni, ityādīni*) to the names of the Saṃhitās at each level of the hierarchy. This is the case even with the *divyaśāstras*, suggesting the belief that this category may also be added to at a future time. It is also demonstrated by the fact that no Vaikhānasa works are named in the list of *rājasa* texts, despite the earlier claim that this category includes such works.

The second notable characteristic of this scheme which is highlighted by the admission that new texts can be included at the *munibhāṣita* level is that the *divya* texts are unambiguously posited as the standard by which all other texts must be measured. To acquire any sort of authority, a text which is not directly revealed by God must conform as closely as possible to the *divyaśāstras*, and if it in any way contradicts (*virodhi*) these, it should be rejected.<sup>127</sup> This premise mirrors to some extent the *vedamūlatva* principle as articulated in the Pūrvamīmāṃsā school and subsequently adopted by several South Indian Vedāntin thinkers.<sup>128</sup> I shall comment further on the role of the *vedamūlatva* principle in the textual history of the Pāñcarātra in the following chapter.

The author of the PārS accentuates the hierarchical structure of the canon by imposing an additional hierarchy (in the form of *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*) onto the level of the *munibhāṣitaśāstra*. This strategy, an innovation from what is found in the SS, multiplies the number of levels which exist beneath the celestial teachings, the effect of which is that the authority of the latter is enhanced. The authority of the *divyaśāstras* is also seemingly emphasised in the PārS’s scheme via the author’s omitting the SS’s claim that the *munibhāṣitaśāstras* grant the *puruṣārthas* as their fruit (*phala*) (SS 22.55cd). By omitting this verse, as Rastelli (2006: 109-110) has

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closure transforms a catalogue into a canon”, and that “the essential structure of limitation and closure along with exegetical ingenuity remains constant.”

<sup>127</sup> PārS 10.371c-372: *pārameśvaravākyaṛthair yad virodhi na tad dvija // saṃgrāhyaṃ sāttvikādyeṣu munivākyeṣu yatnataḥ / yad divyāpekṣitaṃ vipra saṃgrāhyaṃ avirodhi tat //*. My comments here repeat the key points of Rastelli’s (2006: 125-126) analysis of this passage.

<sup>128</sup> The similarity between the hierarchical system of the SS and the PārS and the *vedamūlatva* principle is also conveyed by Vedāntadeśika, in his comments on SS 22.52c-58b. Vedāntadeśika’s exegesis, which is later quoted approvingly by Alaśiṅgabhaṭṭa in his STBh (522.4-6), is undoubtedly less restrictive than the PārS in its willingness to place the *munibhāṣita* statements alongside the *divya*, but the Mīmāṃsaka terminology is familiar: *atra anirvāhakam ādyokteḥ iti divyamunibhāṣitayoḥ viruddhārthatvam ucyate* (PRR 29.16-17).

observed, the author removes any reference to the *munibhāṣitaśāstras*' capacity to confer *mokṣa*. In the PārS's scheme the ability to confer *mokṣa* is expressly linked only with the *divyaśāstras* (see PārS 10.357ab). Can we infer from this that the *munibhāṣita* texts are being presented here as soteriologically ineffective, as the Vedas are presented in the PārS's opening *adhyāya*? Quite possibly, although such an inference is not unproblematic, especially if we have concluded, contra Rastelli, that the PārS counts *itself* among this group of texts, albeit as belonging to the superior (i.e. *sāttvika*) class.<sup>129</sup> Whilst the *rājasa* texts certainly appear to be restricted to the granting of supernatural powers (*siddhi*),<sup>130</sup> the capacity of the *sāttvika* texts is not explicitly stated here, and so their status with regard to this matter remains unclear.

However, if we limit our efforts, as seems advisable in this instance, to attempting to understand in more general terms the significance of this classificatory scheme, several key features appear indubitable. Firstly, the *divyaśāstras* are to be regarded as being *substantially* different from all texts beneath them. While it is possible for new works to be *munivākyavat*, there is no such concept as *divyavākyavat*. The closest another text can come to the celestial teachings is to conform in its entirety with those direct utterances of God,<sup>131</sup> and even then the capacity to grant *mokṣa* remains, *in this presentation*, exclusively associated with the celestial teachings. Secondly, the author of the PārS imposes a more limited capacity onto the *munibhāṣitaśāstras* than is present in the SS's scheme. This is achieved not only by omitting the reference to the *puruṣārthas*, but also by the imposition of an internal hierarchy, so that, for instance, this level of text now incorporates works of the Vaikhānasa tradition, as well as (*tāmasa*) works which have no direct relation to god's teaching.

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<sup>129</sup> The author of this section of the PārS certainly doesn't indicate that the PārS should be considered as *divyaśāstra*, and bearing in mind that large sections of this text are incorporated from the SS, PauṣS and JS, it does seem reasonable to view the PārS as conforming to its own description of the *sāttvika* type of *munibhāṣitaśāstra*.

<sup>130</sup> The description of the *rājasa* category at PārS 10.361-367b begins: "[That which] praises, as well as bestows, supernatural powers..." (*praśaṃsakam yat siddhīnāṃ saṃpravartakam apy atha*). This line is incorporated from SS 22.54cd, where it is applied to the *munivākya* level in general.

<sup>131</sup> Elsewhere the PārS presents *itself* as strictly conforming to the celestial teachings, though it does not make this claim in the passage under review.

The restrictive, exclusivist approach of the PārS becomes more evident when it is compared to the delineation of the Pāñcarātra canon that is contained in the PādS. As in the PārS, the ‘Pāñcarātra’ teaching (*śāstra*) is presented in the PādS as being superior to the Vedas, which are depicted as being unable to lead one to liberation. Thus, in the PādS’s opening chapter (*jp* 1.92d-93b) we read that “the tree which possesses the Kalpasūtras [among its branches] delivers everything that is desired to those who desire, except for liberation” (*kalpakadrumaḥ // arthibhyo vāñchitaṃ sarvaṃ prayacchati gatiṃ vinā*).<sup>132</sup> In contrast to the PārS, however, the author of this section of the PādS incorporates the claim relating to the *puruṣārthas* that is contained in the SS, and applies it to the Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition *in general*. Comparing the ‘Pāñcarātra’ to the “tree which possesses the Kalpasūtras [among its branches]”, in other words the “Veda-tree”, we are told that “the teaching called Pāñcarātra grants the group of four [i.e. the *puruṣārthas*] as its fruit” (*pañcarātrākhyasāstraṃ tu caturvargaphalapradam*, PādS *jp* 1.93cd).

Shortly before enumerating 108 Pāñcarātra scriptures, the PādS’s narrator Saṃvarta declares that “Nārāyaṇa himself is the proclaimer of all the Tantras” (*tantrāṇāṃ caiva sarveṣāṃ vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam*, PādS *jp* 1.88cd). This claim is also found in other South Indian Saṃhitās which contain extensive lists of Pāñcarātra works, such as the *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* (ViśS) and the *Bhāradvājasāṃhitā*.<sup>133</sup> Such claims, of course, openly contradict the PārS’s assertion that only the three celestial scriptures are directly revealed by God. According to this section of the PādS, then, there is no hierarchy among the Pāñcarātra teachings, since all are revealed by God, and all grant the *puruṣārthas*. The much more inclusive nature of this portion of the PādS is perhaps best exemplified by the declaration, in the final verse of the PādS’s opening *adhyāya*, that “a person who regularly recites aloud the names of the Tantras

<sup>132</sup> See also PādS *jp* 1.2-3b, where the seers (*ṛṣi*) complain to Kaṇva that they have studied the Vedas together with their auxiliary parts (*sāṅgopāṅga*), but that this has not led them to liberation (*kaivalya*).

<sup>133</sup> See for example ViśS 2.14-15, where it stated that the Tantras are “heard from the mouth of Nārāyaṇa” (*nārāyaṇamukhāc chrutvā*, 14a), and ViśS 4.1ab: *bhagavatparam ity uktaṃ tantram etat tvayā guro /*; and the *Bhāradvājasāṃhitā*, which is not available to me, but is reported by Smith (1975: 321) to contain the claim (at 1.1-8a) that “the Pāñcarātra system... came directly from the mouth of Viṣṇu.”

is liberated from all evil, and attains eternal *brahman*.”<sup>134</sup> The ViśS (2.33cd) contains a very similar claim: “One who knows these names of the Tantras is entitled to liberation” (*etāni tantranāmāni yo jñāti sa muktibhāk*).

What can the contrast between the two types of canonical classification found in the PārS and the PādS teach us about the contexts from which these works emerged? Should the exclusivist attitude conveyed in the PārS be interpreted simply as being indicative of the Āgamasiddhāntins, who followed their own ritual system and claimed exclusive allegiance to the “original Veda”, in contrast to the Mantrasiddhāntins who performed both Pāñcarātriśa and Vedic rites, and claimed that their texts were *based on* the Veda?<sup>135</sup> In other words, were such attitudes somehow “intrinsic” to these traditions’ self-understanding, or might they also reflect their respective historical circumstances? To be sure, it seems very probable that the canonical list of scriptures found in the PārS predates the PādS’s much more extensive list. But might geography, as well as chronology, have been a determining factor here? In other words, could the environments in which these texts were produced, Śrīraṅgam in the case of the PārS and Kāñcīpuram in the case of the PādS, have been in any way relevant to the development of these contrasting ways of thinking about the Pāñcarātra scriptures?

Much has been written on the “cosmopolitanism” and “religious pluralism” of Kāñcī during the medieval period (e.g. Mumme 1988, Hopkins 2001). The former Pallava capital remained an important mercantile centre throughout the era of Cōḷa rule, and thereafter it continued to host, as it had for several centuries, diverse religious communities. Although by the time of the twelfth century the once substantial Buddhist presence appears to have considerably diminished (Monius 2001), significant Jain and Vaiṣṇava communities remained, even while they struggled to compete with Śaiva groups for social dominance and Cōḷa patronage (Champakalakshmi 1996). In addition, a number of separate, powerful Brahminical communities surrounded the city (Heitzman 2001), a consequence of royally instituted

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<sup>134</sup> PādS *jp* 1.116: *tantrāṇāṃ nāmadheyāni yo nityaṃ paṭhate naraḥ / sarvapāpavinirmukto yāti brahma sanātanam* //.

<sup>135</sup> I undertake a fuller discussion of this last point below.

land grants (*brahmadeya*), while communities associated with competing philosophical traditions purportedly existed side by side in Kāñcī itself.<sup>136</sup>

In comparison, Śrīraṅgam was a much smaller town with a decidedly less cosmopolitan atmosphere. The historian R. Champakalakshmi (1987: 99) describes Kāñcī as a “multi-temple centre” and contrasts it with Śrīraṅgam, an example of a “sacred centre which originated and evolved around a single cult centre”. Although the power and political influence of the ruling, Śaiva-oriented Cōḷas should not be underestimated,<sup>137</sup> Śrīraṅgam was an overwhelmingly Vaiṣṇava town, dominated by the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple, a Vaiṣṇava equivalent in this respect to the Śaiva town of Cidambaram (*ibid.*). The main competition that the Pāñcarātra faced here was from the Vaikhānasa tradition. Hari Rao (1976) dicusses how the *Kōyiloḷuku*, the Śrīraṅgam temple chronicle, describes in great detail the substitution, by Rāmānuja, of a Vaikhānasa-based system of temple-worship for one based on the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. However, this did not signal the end of this competitive rivalry, since from 1223-1225 CE, Śrīraṅgam was occupied by the Oḍḍas, the army of the Eastern Gaṅga King Anaṅgabhīma III, who reinstated Vaikhānasa ritual practices throughout the short period of their occupation (Spencer 1978: 18).

Bearing in mind that Rastelli assigns the composition of the PārS to a period subsequent to the career of Rāmānuja, and that she favours a date prior to the social and political upheavals which affected Śrīraṅgam during the thirteenth century, we might tentatively suppose that the PārS was partially, or even wholly, composed between these two events, in other words c. 1175-1223 CE. The fact that the Oḍḍas could reinstate a Vaikhānasa system of worship at least half a century after Rāmānuja’s own liturgical “reformation” suggests that this other Vaiṣṇava tradition must have maintained a relatively strong presence in Śrīraṅgam throughout this period. This may help to explain why the author of the section of the PārS addressed

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<sup>136</sup> Both Mumme (1988: 8) and Hopkins (2001: 36) refer to the presence in Kāñcī, during Vedāntadeśika’s time, of *maṭhas* associated with Vedānta, Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā.

<sup>137</sup> Heitzman (1997: 14) writes of the period: “There is little indication that religious institutions in receipt of gifts set themselves up as separate political or military powers; instead, religious institutions and brāhmaṇas remained everywhere dependent on a secular arm which took care of these activities.”



above felt the need to incorporate the Vaikhānasa tradition, at a lower level, within his own - an example of Paul Hacker's (e.g. 1995) conception of *Inklusivismus*.<sup>138</sup>

Employing a similar technique, the PādS (*jp* 1.47abc) asserts in its opening *adhyāya* that “There are six kinds of mutually contradictory Tantras which have you as their deity, O Śaṅkara” (*ṣaṭprakārāṇi tantrāṇi tvad daivatyāni śaṅkara / parasparaviruddhāni*). At PādS *jp* 1.50-53, these six Tantras are shown to be Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Buddhism, Jainism, the Pāñcarātra and the Śaiva teachings (the latter being subdivided into Kāpāla, Śuddhaśaiva, and Pāśupata). Each of these are said to be “established on earth” by the Bhagavat (PādS *jp* 1.48cd),<sup>139</sup> and the “unchecked” or “uncontrolled” emergence of the “other five” teachings is said to proceed “by Viṣṇu's *māyā*” (*vaiṣṇavyā māyayā loke pracaranti nirāṅkuśāḥ*, PādS *jp* 1.57ab). The very name ‘Pañcarātra’ is explained on the basis of these other five teachings: “The five (*pañca*) other great teachings are like night (or ‘darkness’, *rātrī*) in the presence of *that* [i.e. Pañcarātra]: [so] it comes forth into the world with that name.”<sup>140</sup>

It is highly unlikely that religio-philosophical systems called ‘Sāṃkhya’ and ‘Yoga’ represented a significant challenge to the Pāñcarātra in twelfth and thirteenth century Kāñcīpuram. Rather, this list of teachings is much more likely to be a convenient shorthand for *all* of the religious paths alternative to the Pāñcarātra, with Sāṃkhya and Yoga retaining their older connotations of, respectively, knowledge-based and “action”-based soteriologies. Where the PārS incorporates the Vaikhānasa tradition within itself, then, the PādS appears to include and subordinate *all* religious traditions. I will discuss this strategy further in Chapter Six, in particular reference to the *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā*. Here it will suffice to ask: might such a religiously plural environment as Kāñcī encourage an inclusive attitude towards the scriptures of one's

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<sup>138</sup> See also Halbfass' (1995) Introduction. Elsewhere, at PārS 19.549 (→ ĪS 21.586), the Vaikhānasa system (*tantra*) is explicitly denounced, alongside that of the “Śaiva Pāśupatas”, as being contrary (*viruddha*) to the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas.

<sup>139</sup> Among these, the Buddhist and Jain teachings are attributed to the Bhagavat himself, who is “skillful in the concealment of knowledge” (*jñānāpahnavaniṣṇātam*), and who “assumes the form” (*mūrtim samāsthāya*) of these traditions' teachers for his own purposes (PādS *jp* 1.51-52b).

<sup>140</sup> PādS *jp* 1.72: *pañcatārāṇi śāstrāṇi rātrī yaṁ te mahānti api / tatsannidhau samākhyāsau tena loke pravartate* // Cf. ViśS 2.6: *sāṃkhyayogādayaḥ pañca rātrāyante 'sya samnidhau / tasmād vā pañcarātrārthaḥ procyate sūrisattamaiḥ* // – “The five [teachings] Sāṃkhya, Yoga etc. are eclipsed (*rātrāyante*) in the presence of this. Thus, the meaning of ‘Pañcarātra’ is explained by the best of sages.” Cf. also PauṣS 38.307c-308, wherein the “five nights” (*pañcarātram*) are Purāṇa, Veda, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

own tradition? Certainly, the competition for the control of temples that the Pāñcarātra faced in Kāñcī would have been more formidable than in “single-cult centres” such as Śrīraṅgam and Melkote, the town in present day Karnataka with which the ĪS has been associated for much of its history. Such a competitive environment is hardly likely to inspire a restrictive or delimiting approach to what could reasonably be claimed as one’s own scriptural corpus. As Yāmuna demonstrates in his ĀP, a unified and coherent, albeit internally diverse “system” is better equipped to counter opposition than an assemblage of distinct groups or texts. And if the question is turned around the other way, perhaps the Āgamasiddhāntins in places such as Śrīraṅgam and Melkote had less reason to persuade outsiders of the magnitude of their own scriptural corpus, or of the essential unity of the broader tradition to which they belonged. Since these Āgamasiddhāntins had already explicitly rejected the Veda, there were presumably fewer outsiders who would consider accepting them anyway.<sup>141</sup>

The contrasts between Kāñcī and Śrīraṅgam which I have advanced here as being possibly relevant to differing methodological approaches towards Pāñcarātra canon-formation should not be taken too far, lest it be forgotten that both towns had close connections with each other throughout the medieval period and that, in addition to the Āgamasiddhāntins, Śrīraṅgam was also home to such influential figures as Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika, all of whom evince in their work, albeit in different ways, the kind of “inclusive” or “cosmopolitan” attitudes that I have been associating here with Kāñcī. Moreover, an explanatory model based purely on a sort of “geographical determinism” is, in this instance, almost certainly unsuitable. However, it should nonetheless be noted that Āgamasiddhāntins do appear to have congregated in smaller single-cult centres, while works such as the PādS and the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, whose authors aligned themselves with the Vedic tradition, and adopted a more *inclusive* approach to the Pāñcarātra scriptures, were products of a more cosmopolitan religious environment, in this case the multi-temple town of Kāñcī.

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<sup>141</sup> However, it should be noted that there *were*, according to the PādS, followers of the Vedas who joined the Ekāyana. PādS cp 21.54ab (→ BhT 24.26ab) reads: *ekāyane praviṣṭānām traividyaṇām ayaṁ kramaḥ* /.

ii.) *Appropriation and unification in the late Saṃhitās*

What can the classificatory innovations in such texts as the PādS and the PārS tell us about the Pāñcarātra traditions in South India? To what degree were these “canonical” schemes describing well-established exegetical principles and Pāñcarātrika identities, and to what degree were such systems modelled on the texts themselves? With regard to the four Siddhāntas the second question is very difficult to answer, though the Vaikhānasa literature, which contains various taxonomies of Pāñcarātra groups, may provide a clue that this system of classification did not long precede its earliest descriptions in the Pāñcarātra literature. For the earliest probable Vaikhānasa reference to the ‘Siddhānta’ system of classification occurs only in the *Ānandasamhitā*, which is among the latest of the Vaikhānasa “medieval corpus”.<sup>142</sup> With regard to the organisation and classification of the Pāñcarātra scriptures, these processes are not yet evident in the earliest Pāñcarātra works, and the textual evidence suggests that they did not begin to gain importance until about the twelfth century, some time after Yāmuna’s composition of the ĀP.<sup>143</sup> This is suggested by the fact that those works which classify and enumerate the Saṃhitās, such as the PādS and the PārS, do so as part of an overall attempt, that is absent in the earlier scriptures, to provide scriptural authority for a Pāñcarātra system of temple-worship.<sup>144</sup> Although his *modus operandi* and his intended audience are clearly different, this is also one of Yāmuna’s main objectives in the ĀP. However, despite the fact that he names and quotes several Saṃhitās, Yāmuna does not refer to any scriptural system of text-classification, or to any “canonical” list, and this indicates that such strategies were indeed not yet “well-established” within the Pāñcarātra context.

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<sup>142</sup> See Colas (1990: 27), who reports that the *Ānandasamhitā* (8.23-24) describes the *siddhānta* of the *avāntaravaiṣṇavas* (the Pāñcarātrikas) as “fourfold”, though it does not name the subdivisions.

<sup>143</sup> However, as we will see below, a work *external* to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, namely the Śaiva *Śrīkaṇṭhī* or *Śrīkaṇṭhīyasamhitā*, contains what may be a pre-Yāmuna “canonical” list of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.

<sup>144</sup> In other words, the cataloguing of scriptures constitutes an attempt to distinguish those works prescribing rites for temple-worship which have scriptural authority from those which do not.

To reiterate, there was no single classificatory method employed by the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitas, and so any discussion of a Pāñcarātra “canon” needs to be prefaced with the caveat that what was “canonical” for one Pāñcarātra tradition, for instance the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS, was, as we have seen above, not necessarily canonical for another.<sup>145</sup> Here it is worth recalling Michael Witzel’s (1997: 259-260) remarks on the development of the *Vedic* canon:

[O]riginally there was no canon of Vedic texts, no Vedic “Scripture”, but only a canon of texts accepted by each school... This means: all school texts taken together form the Vedic canon. It does not mean that all of these texts were accepted by all Brahmins. A working definition, thus, may be: the Vedic canon consists of the sum of all those texts in Vedic Sanskrit that originated in and were used by the various Vedic schools (*śākhās*).

While it is highly probable that the fourfold ‘Siddhānta’ system of classification within the Pāñcarātra was a South Indian innovation which based itself upon the Vedic precedent, and which might be usefully interpreted therefore as presenting an *ideal model* rather than a purely descriptive account,<sup>146</sup> it is nonetheless evident that there were real divisions among Pāñcarātrikas, that these divisions are likely to have preceded the extant Pāñcarātra scriptural literature,<sup>147</sup> and that, to paraphrase Witzel, not *all* Pāñcarātra scriptures were “originally” considered “canonical” by *all* Pāñcarātra groups. This is nowhere more evident than with regard to the “three jewels”.

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<sup>145</sup> It also needs to be emphasised, when speaking of traditions *within* the Pāñcarātra, that many of the texts at our disposal do not “belong” to one Siddhānta or another, but rather are composite entities which often appear to have undergone redactions, for example, by both Āgamasiddhāntins and Mantrasiddhāntins (or their “Veda-congruent” equivalents). An obvious example of this is the PauṣS, though the ĪS and the PādS also betray the influence of both Siddhāntas.

<sup>146</sup> To characterise the Siddhānta system of classification as in some sense normative (as opposed to “purely descriptive”) is not to deny that Pāñcarātra groups may have been arranged according to this model during certain periods, at least in the eyes of some Pāñcarātrikas. The delineations of the four Siddhāntas found in both the PādS and the PārS are certainly presented as “descriptive” accounts, and for instance the PādS, PārS and BhT all prescribe reparation rites (*prāyaścitta*) for those who have “mixed” ritual practices from different Siddhāntas. Elsewhere in the PādS (*kp* 24.6b), meanwhile, one of the essential characteristics of the ideal *ācārya* is said to be *siddhāntabhedavid*.

<sup>147</sup> As we have seen above, Rājānaka Ratnākara refers to distinct Pāñcarātra groups in his *Haravijaya*, written in c. 830 CE. Śaṅkara also appears to recognise distinctions among groups which perform worship at the “five times” and which venerate the four Vyūha forms of god.

As we have seen, three of the four Pāñcarātra scriptures which claim the superiority of the JS, SS and PauṣS also mention a “root-Veda” or an “original Veda” (*mūlaveda*) within the same context. In each instance, this “original Veda” designates the so-called ‘Ekāyanaveda’,<sup>148</sup> thus linking these passages, and therefore we must assume the “three jewels doctrine” itself, with the Pāñcarātra tradition that is referred to in the PādS and the PārS as the ‘Āgamasiddhānta’.<sup>149</sup> As outlined above, the Āgamasiddhānta is variously characterised in the PādS by its allegiance to the Ekāyanaveda, by having liberation as its single goal, by prescribing its “leading rite” (*nayakarma*) for all four *varṇas*, by the fact that its members do not undergo *dīkṣā*, and by the fact that they do not use Vedic mantras and recite the *dvādaśākṣara* mantra without the Vedic elements *ṛṣi* and *chandas*. According to the ŚrīprśS (16.31c-34), the Āgamasiddhānta shares these last characteristics with both the Tantra and the Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, and it is exclusively members of the *Mantrasiddhānta* who are qualified to use Vedic mantras alongside those belonging to the ‘Ekāyana’. The PādS’s claim that the Āgamasiddhānta does not teach the *ṛṣi* and *chandas* elements of a mantra appears to be corroborated by both the PārS and the ĪS, neither of which teach these (Rastelli 2006: 208-209). In the absence of any conflicting evidence, then, this characteristic alone should make it relatively easy to distinguish textual sources belonging to the Āgamasiddhānta from those which belong to the Mantrasiddhānta, at least when we are considering those works which contain these classifications.

The type of Pāñcarātrika who adheres to the Mantrasiddhānta is commonly referred to as a “mixed worshipper” (*vyāmiśrayājin*) by Āgamasiddhāntin or

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<sup>148</sup> See especially PārS 1.32c-33b: *ity uktvādhyāpayām āsa vedam ekāyanābhīdam // mūlabhūtas tu mahato vedavṛkṣasya yo mahān /*. – “Having spoken thus, he taught the Veda called Ekāyana, which is the main root of the great Veda-tree”; ĪS 1.19-20b (← PārS 1.57c-58b, 1.33ab); ĪS 1.24ab (← PārS 1.76ab): *mahato vedavṛkṣasya mūlabhūto mahān ayam /*. – “This [Ekāyanaveda] is the main root of the great Veda-tree”; ŚrīprśS 2.38ab: *vedam ekāyanam nāma vedānāṃ śirasi sthitam /*. – “The Veda named Ekāyana is situated at the head of the Vedas”.

<sup>149</sup> I have referred to the claim that the SS, PauṣS and JS are the superior Pāñcarātra scriptures as the “three jewels doctrine” for ease of exposition, though it should not obscure the fact that these texts are not referred to as the “three jewels” in any extant Āgamasiddhānta source.

‘Ekāyana’ authors who consider such worshippers to be inferior.<sup>150</sup> An example of this can be found in the PauṣS:

*viprā ekāyanākhyā ye te bhaktās tattvato ’cyute // ekāntinaḥ sutattvasthā dehāntān nānyayājinaḥ / kartavyatvena ye viṣṇuṃ saṃyajanti phalaṃ vinā // prāpnuvanti ca dehānte vāsudevatvam abjaja / vyāmiśrayājinaś cānye bhaktābhāsā tu te smṛtāḥ //* – “Those Brahmins that are called Ekāyanas are truly devotees of Acyuta. They who worship Viṣṇu as a duty [that is] without fruit, worshipping no other [god], are Ekāntins (“they have a single aim”) who [will] exist in their true state after death. [In other words] at death they attain the state of Vāsudeva, O Lotus-born! And the others are mixed sacrificers - they are considered to be devotees in appearance only.” (PauṣS 36.260c-262)

The division between those Vaiṣṇavas who “mix” a Pāñcarātriśa system of image worship with elements taken from the Vedic liturgy, and those who typically “reject” or who are not “qualified for” the use of Vedic mantras and the institution of *varṇa*-based rules, appears to have been the most significant schism within the South Indian Pāñcarātriśa in the early centuries of the second millennium. The *Bhārgavatantra* (BhT 24.17-18) characterises these groups as, respectively, the “mixed” (*miśra*) and the “pure” (*śuddha*) Vaiṣṇavas.<sup>151</sup> Representatives of these two Pāñcarātriśa traditions are contrasted with each other already in Yāmuna’s *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (ĀP) (169-171) and, as we have seen above, both traditions produced scriptural works which glorify their own tradition and undermine the other. Conversely, no extant work, as far as I am aware, identifies itself with the Tantra or Tantrāntara Siddhāntas.<sup>152</sup> To the extent that these appear to have been the two most prominent types of Pāñcarātriśa in South India during the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the descriptions of the ‘Āgasasiddhānta’ and the ‘Mantrasiddhānta’ contained in such texts as the PādS and the PārS appear to offer

<sup>150</sup> The designation “mixed worshipper” (*vyāmiśrayājīn*) does not only refer to worshippers who perform both Pāñcarātriśa and Vedic rites. In the PārS, for instance, it is used more generally to denote *all* followers of the “mixed dharma” (*miśradharma*), which is the PārS’s name for the Vedas.

<sup>151</sup> The “mixed” Vaiṣṇavas, who are described as *traividya*, are here associated with the *aṣṭākṣara* mantra, and the “pure” Vaiṣṇavas, who follow the Ekāyanaveda, with the *dvādaśākṣara* mantra. Colas (1990: 26) reports that the Vaikhāṇasa work *Kriyādhikāra* also divides the Pāñcarātriśa into *miśra* and *śuddha* sub-groups and that, according to the *Yajñādhikāra*, the latter has no *vedamaryādā*.

<sup>152</sup> However, according to Vedāntadeśika (PRR 30.18ff) the *Śrīkarasaṃhitā* associates *itself* with the ‘Purāṇasiddhānta’. The PRR (31.1-2) quotes this text thus: *etat purāṇasiddhāntaṃ śrīkaraṃ ca viśeṣataḥ / idaṃ śrīkarasaṃjñākhyam bhogamokṣaphalapradam //*. Vedāntadeśika (PRR 30.21-22 and 31.5-6) asserts that the name ‘Purāṇasiddhānta’ designates the ‘Tantrāntarasiddhānta’, and argues that it is precisely the Tantrāntarasiddhānta that is denoted by the particle *ca* in the above verse.

something of a valuable, albeit inevitably incomplete, Pāñcarātri ethnography of this period.

It is notable that of the eight Pāñcarātra scriptures that contain, or are said to contain, a hierarchical description of the Siddhānta divisions, five of these place the Āgamasiddhānta at the top. These are the PauṣS, the PārS, the ĪS and, according to Vedāntadeśika, the HP and the *Kālottara*.<sup>153</sup> Only the PādS, the BhT (whose account is clearly based on that of the PādS),<sup>154</sup> and the later ŚrīprśS give the highest status to the Mantrasiddhānta.<sup>155</sup> If we are to assume, as we surely must, that the fourfold Siddhānta system of classification developed within (or, in the other possible scenario, was first adopted by) *one particular* Pāñcarātra tradition (i.e. as opposed to the improbable scenario that it simultaneously emerged among distinct traditions), it would seem quite likely, then, that this particular tradition was that which identified itself, at least in certain works, as precisely the ‘Āgamasiddhānta’. This thesis, which is speculative, also appears to find support in the probable status of the PauṣS as the work which contains the earliest extant description of the Siddhānta divisions. For the passage in question (i.e. PauṣS 38.293-307b) gives precedence to the Āgama “called Siddhānta” (*siddhāntasaṃjñam*, 294c), which it lists alongside the Mantra, Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas. These verses were presumably authored by a member of the tradition which is elsewhere called ‘Āgamasiddhānta’. In addition, as we shall see in a later

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<sup>153</sup> The verses attributed to the HP or, as Vedāntadeśika names it, the ‘*Hayagrīvasaṃhitā*’ in the PRR (8.5-8) read: *āgamākhyam hi siddhāntam sanmokṣaikaḥ prapadam / mantrasaṃjñam hi siddhāntam siddhimokṣapradam nṛṇām // tantrasaṃjñam tu siddhāntam caturvargaphalapradam / tantrāntaram hi siddhāntam vāñchitārthaphalapradam //*. – “The Siddhānta named Āgama grants liberation as its only fruit. The Siddhānta called Mantra grants to people liberation and magical powers (*siddhi*). The Siddhānta called Tantra grants the “group of four” (i.e. the *puruṣārthas*) as its fruit. The Tantrāntara Siddhānta grants as its fruit the “desired goal”. Vedāntadeśika (PRR 8.9) explains that the “desired goal” here indicates liberation (*apavarga*). The verses attributed to the *Kālottara* in the PRR (31.14-18) read: *anekabhedabhinnaṃ ca pañcarātrākhyam āgamam / pūrvam āgamasiddhāntam mantrākhyam tadanantaram // tantraṃ tantrāntaram ceti caturdhā parikīrtitam //*. – “The tradition named Pāñcarātra is split into various divisions (*bheda*). The first is the Āgama, and after that there is the one called Mantra, the Tantra, and the Tantrāntara. Thus it is said to be fourfold.”

<sup>154</sup> See BhT 22.87-93b, and BhT 24.19-20 (← PādS cp 21.36, 37cd, 38ab), BhT 24.25-27b (← PādS cp 21.53-54b, 38c-39b).

<sup>155</sup> See e.g. ŚrīprśS 16.32-34b: *tantrāntare tv āgame ca siddhānte tantrasaṃjñike / teṣu pūjāpravṛttānām dīkṣā nirbījasaṃjñikā // anyeṣāṃ dīkṣākaraṇe teṣāṃ anadhikāritā / ato nirbīja ity uktā vidvadbhiḥ kamalekṣaṇe // sabījaṃ mantrasiddhāntadīkṣākramam udīryate /*. – “For those engaged in worship according to the Tantrāntara, the Āgama and the Siddhānta called Tantra, the initiation is called ‘without seed’. For them there is no entitlement to perform the initiation of others. Thus it is called ‘without seed’ by the learned, O lotus-eyed. [Conversely] the method of initiation in the Mantrasiddhānta is called ‘with seed’.”

chapter, it is the classification found in Āgamasiddhānta sources which is accepted as “canonical” by Vedāntadeśika in his PRR. Irrespective of its origin, we can be certain, at any rate, that the Siddhānta system of classification was adopted fairly quickly by at least some Pāñcarātrikas who also performed Vedic rites, as is proven by its presence in the PādS.

The textual evidence suggests that a similar process occurred with regard to the “three jewels”, though it appears to have taken considerably longer for this theory to have gained acceptance among the non-Āgamasiddhāntin Pāñcarātrikas. As stated above, three of the four extant works which contain a passage claiming the superiority of the JS, SS and PauṣS refer in the same instance to the ‘Ekāyanaveda’, thus linking these passages to the Āgamasiddhānta. However, whilst the PārS and the majority of the ĪS are undoubtedly authored by Āgamasiddhāntins, the third work which associates the “three jewels doctrine” with the ‘Ekāyanaveda’, namely the ŚrīprśS, is almost certainly primarily a work of the ‘Mantrasiddhānta’. This is evident not only from the fact that substantial portions of this text borrow from or are based upon the PādS, as Padmanabhan (1969) has shown, but also from its frequent use of Vedic mantras<sup>156</sup> allied to its claim that among the four Siddhāntas it is only members of the Mantrasiddhānta who are entitled to use Vedic mantras alongside those belonging to the ‘Ekāyana’ (the term ‘Ekāyana’ being used here to refer to the Pāñcarātra in general).<sup>157</sup> How, then, are we to interpret the inclusion of these ‘Ekāyana’ passages in the ŚrīprśS? It is worth our while to briefly address each of these.

In several places in the ŚrīprśS (e.g. at 2.38ff, 16.20 and 16.34), the terms ‘Ekāyana’ and ‘Ekāyanaveda’ are used to refer to the Pāñcarātra tradition and the Pāñcarātra teaching in general.<sup>158</sup> On each of these occasions, the Vedas are referred to in the same verse - once in order to accord the Ekāyanaveda the higher authority (2.38ab: *vedam ekāyanaṃ nāma vedānāṃ śirasi sthitam*), and in the other two

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<sup>156</sup> These are listed by Padmanabhan (1969) in the appendix to the ŚrīprśS.

<sup>157</sup> ŚrīprśS 16.34: *sabījaṃ mantrasiddhāntadīkṣākramam udīryate / caturvedoktamantrais ca mantrair ekāyanasthitaiḥ* // – “[Conversely] the method of initiation in the Mantrasiddhānta is called ‘with seed’. [It is performed] with mantras enunciated in the four Vedas and with mantras contained in the Ekāyana.”

<sup>158</sup> The “Veda named Ekāyana” is also mentioned at ŚrīprśS 23.185a, though in this instance its precise referent is not clear.



instances to place the Ekāyanaveda and the Vedas on an equal footing. In each of these examples, the idea of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ appears to be employed as a means of establishing the authority of the Pāñcarātra tradition, but only in the first instance (i.e. at ŚrīprśS 2.38ab) does the representation of the Ekāyanaveda conform to the characteristically Ekāyana view, which we have seen articulated in the PārS and the ĪS, that the Ekāyanaveda is *superior* to the Vedas. Such a claim is unlikely to have been authored by the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātrikas, at least according to the representation of these groups that we find in the PādS.<sup>159</sup> In light of this, I propose that ŚrīprśS 2.38ab, along with a number of other verses in the section 2.26-46b, have been borrowed by a Mantrasiddhāntin author from an Āgamasiddhānta source. This hypothesis is preferable to one which would have the whole passage borrowed from, or re-worked by, an Āgamasiddhāntin author or editor, since the description of the Pāñcarātra “duties” (*kārya*) at 2.43-46b includes initiation (*dīkṣā*) (45a) which, as we have seen, was *not* undergone in the Āgamasiddhānta according to a variety of sources. In addition to 2.38ab, I propose that the reference to the Ekāyanaveda as a *nivṛttiśāstra* at 2.32a, and the contrasting description at 2.26d of the three Vedas as advancing a path of ritual action (*karmapravartinī*) have also been borrowed from an Āgamasiddhānta source, since such terminology is key to Āgamasiddhāntin self-understanding in the PārS, and is quite distinct from the language used in “outsider” descriptions of the Ekāyana found, for example, in the PādS, from which the ŚrīprśS borrows quite freely, and also the BhT.<sup>160</sup> Other apparent borrowings from Āgamasiddhānta sources include the *nirukti* analysis of the name ‘Ekāyana’ at 2.39 (cf. PārS 1.57c-58b and ĪS 1.19), and the claim at 2.41c that the Pāñcarātra *śāstra* is “eternal, like the Veda” (*vedavan nityam*).

<sup>159</sup> See especially the Mantrasiddhāntin author’s description of the Āgamasiddhānta at PādS *cp* 21.30-54b.

<sup>160</sup> On the use of this terminology in the PārS see Rastelli (2006: 163-166). Rastelli shows that the PārS borrows these terms from the *Nārāyaṇīya*, but modifies their meaning so that “*pravṛtti* ist eine (rituelle) Tätigkeit mit dem Zweck, die Erfüllung von Wünschen zu erlangen [und] *nivṛtti* ist eine (rituelle) Tätigkeit, die ohne jegliches Begehren durchgeführt wird...” (ibid: 166). Following the *Nārāyaṇīya*, PārS 1.45c*ff* associates *pravṛtti* with the Vedas, and *nivṛtti* with its own teaching (which is, for the PārS, the Ekāyanaveda). The PādS (*cp* 19.117a, 21.35c), meanwhile, describes the “renunciation of action” (*karmasaṃnyāsa*) and the “desireless” (*nirāśa*) worship of god in the Āgamasiddhānta, but it does not favourably contrast these practices with those employed by followers of the Veda. See also BhT 24.19-27b.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the ŚrīprśS, the term ‘Ekāyanaveda’ is used to refer to the Pāñcarātra teaching in general. The verse in question reads as follows:

*yathaiva karmakāṇḍeṣu dīkṣoktā yāgasiddhaye / tathaivaikāyane vede  
pūjāyāgādisiddhaye* // - “Just as initiation (*dīkṣā*) is spoken of [as necessary] for  
the performance of sacrifice in the ritual portions (*karmakāṇḍa*) [of the Veda], so  
too [it is spoken of as necessary] for the performance of worship and sacrifice etc. in  
the Ekāyanaveda.” (ŚrīprśS 16.20)

This verse, then, provides another instance (i.e. alongside ŚrīprśS 2.26-46b) in which an association is drawn between followers of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ and *dīkṣā*. As we have seen above, earlier works such as the PādS and the PārS indicate, contrarily, that followers of the Ekāyanaveda do *not* undergo *dīkṣā*. Of course, the passages from these works which address this issue, such as PādS cp 21.51-53 which explicitly states that “the way of the Ekāyana” (*ekāyanādhvan*) does not involve *dīkṣā*, do not use the designation ‘Ekāyana’ as a name for the Pāñcarātra in general, as is the case in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the ŚrīprśS. As I have stated earlier, the above verse (ŚrīprśS 16.20) occurs in a passage which identifies the ŚrīprśS with the Mantrasiddhānta, and so this is quite a clear example, therefore, of a Mantrasiddhāntin incorporating the idea of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ into his own tradition’s self-understanding. The same process also appears to be at work at ŚrīprśS 49.471c-473, quoted above, which incorporates the presumably Āgamasiddhāntin claim regarding the superiority of the JS, SS and PauṣS. Although we cannot be sure of the “sectarian” identity of the author of this passage, it is quite clear that these verses are borrowed from an Āgamasiddhānta source. This is evident not only from the fact that, as mentioned previously, they strongly echo PārS 1.77 and ĪS 1.25, but also from the fact that the section of the ŚrīprśS in which they are found is replete with borrowings from Āgamasiddhānta sources.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>161</sup> See for example: ŚrīprśS 49.446cd ↔ ĪS 19.103ab; ŚrīprśS 49.448cd ↔ ĪS 19.93ab; ŚrīprśS 49.454abc ↔ ĪS 19.100c-101a; ŚrīprśS 49.457a ↔ ĪS 19.104c; ŚrīprśS 49.464-466a ↔ PārS 19.496-498a → ĪS 19.117c-119c; ŚrīprśS 49.475-476b ↔ PārS 15.928c-929 → ĪS 19.67-68b; ŚrīprśS 49.476c-479b ↔ PārS 19.545-547 → ĪS 21.582c-584; ŚrīprśS 49.481-483b ↔ PārS 10.329-331b → ĪS 23.45c-47; ŚrīprśS 49.486abc ↔ ĪS 19.121abc; ŚrīprśS 49.487a ↔ ĪS 19.123a. It is possible, of course, that the ŚrīprśS borrowed these verses from another work. It should also be noted that close variants of PārS 19.545-548b and 10.329-333b are quoted by Vedāntadeśika in his PRR (18.15ff; 40.8ff).

Why should the ŚrīprśS, a work which seems to have been authored by Mantrasiddhāntins, incorporate these passages extolling the Ekāyanaveda? It appears that by the time of the composition of this work, the Ekāyanaveda, or at least the *idea* of the Ekāyanaveda had, in certain contexts, acquired an authoritative status among the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātrikas. In Yāmuna’s ĀP, of course, we have already encountered an instance of a non-Āgamasiddhāntin (i.e. Yāmuna himself) accepting the validity of the Ekāyanaveda (or the ‘Ekāyanaśruti’), and it should be noted that Vedāntadeśika, whose PRR may well predate the ŚrīprśS, followed Yāmuna in this respect.<sup>162</sup> Turning to the scriptural literature, this pattern is also evident in a section of the PādS which addresses the various *pañcakāla* observances incumbent upon the Pāñcarātriaka initiate. In the passage (PādS cp 13.66c-72b) which deals with the study of texts (*svādhyāya*), the initiate is instructed to study, alongside the various recensions of the three Vedas, the “original recension based on the Ekāyana” (*mūlaśākhām ekāyanasamāśrayām*). Although, again, the “sectarian” identity of the author of this passage is not absolutely clear,<sup>163</sup> his allegiance to the three Vedas and the respectful reference, for example, to “experts in the six limbs [of the Veda]” most probably indicates a non-Āgamasiddhānta background.<sup>164</sup> Certainly the remainder of this chapter exhibits the kind of Veda-congruent Vaiṣṇava devotionism which is more representative of the Mantrasiddhānta.<sup>165</sup>

That the PādS should contain a passage wherein an apparently non-Āgamasiddhāntin author invokes the Ekāyanaveda might appear somewhat surprising given that in this work’s descriptions of the Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas (see especially PādS cp 21.30-54b), the Ekāyanaveda is explicitly associated *only* with the

<sup>162</sup> See, for example, PRR 4.5-18 (← ĀP 169.7-170.11). The ŚrīprśS is not quoted by Vedāntadeśika, and thus may well succeed him.

<sup>163</sup> There are passages in the PādS which do appear to have been authored by Āgamasiddhāntins, most notably in the first chapter of the Caryāpāda.

<sup>164</sup> See PādS cp 13.67-70b: *ṛco yajūṃṣi sāmāni bhidyamānāny anekadhā // śākhābhedair mūlaśākhām ekāyanasamāśrayām / trayīmayīm adhīyīta sukhāsīnas samāhitaḥ // anyais sārddham adhīyānaiḥ ṣaḍaṅgeṣu ca kovidaiḥ / adhyāpayīta vā śiṣyān sāstrāṇi vividhāni ca // itihāsapurāṇāni dharmasāstrāṇi vā punaḥ /*

<sup>165</sup> See especially the injunction to perform the Vaiśvadeva ritual at home following the recitation of the *Jitamtestotra*. This act completes the performance of the five “great sacrifices” (*mahāyajña*), which should be undertaken according to one’s Gṛhyasūtra. PādS cp 13.64 reads: *iti vijñāpya deveśaṃ vaiśvadevaṃ svadhāmani / kuryāt pañca mahāyajñān api gṛhyoktavartmanā //* On the *Jitamtestotra* see Colas (1996: 234-236) and Oberhammer (2007: 42-46).

Āgamasiddhānta. We must assume that these two sections of the PādS do not share a common author, and that the summary of the *pañcakāla* duties in PādS *cp* 13 is in all likelihood the later contribution to the text. This is most likely the case because in the *scriptural* literature, the non-Āgamasiddhāntin incorporation of the idea of the Ekāyanaveda is a strategy which is found in the later works, including the ŚrīprśS, as we have just seen, and also the *Śrīpuruṣottamasamhitā* (ŚrīpurS), another work which probably postdates Vedāntadeśika (Smith 1975: 274).

In the opening chapter of the ŚrīpurS, the sage Vasiṣṭha presents the designations ‘Pāñcarātra’, ‘Mūlaveda’, ‘Sāttvata’, ‘Tantra’, ‘Ekāyana’ and ‘Āgama’ as synonymous terms,<sup>166</sup> and in explaining why each of these names is an appropriate designation for the Lord’s teaching (*bhagavacchāstra*), the author incorporates passages from both the PādS and the ĪS, including them alongside each other. In fact, much of the first chapter of the ŚrīpurS is an amalgam of verses borrowed from these two works.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, I believe that we can interpret this section of the ŚrīpurS as a conscious attempt to accommodate forms of self-understanding found within the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra traditions, as represented in the PādS, with those found within the Ekāyana tradition, and articulated in the ĪS, so that both are included within a single, homogeneous Pāñcarātra “system” (*tantram*).<sup>168</sup> Accordingly, as in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* to which I shall turn shortly, there is no mention of distinct Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas in this work. However, the two contrasting Pāñcarātrika modes of self-description sit rather uneasily alongside each other in the ŚrīpurS. Thus, the Ekāyana claim that “this is the main root of the great Veda tree - the Ṛc etc. are its trunk and

<sup>166</sup> ŚrīpurS 1.11ff. See also ŚrīpurS 22.57c-59b (← PādS *cp* 2.87c-88, quoted above): *sa eva sūris suhṛt sāttvataḥ pāñcarātravit // ekāntikas (ekāntikas) tanmayaś ca deśiko dīkṣito ’rcakaḥ / gurur bhāgavataś caiva pūjakaś sādḥako hariḥ // bhāṭṭārakādīr ākhyābhīr ākhyeyaḥ kamalāsana /*.

<sup>167</sup> ŚrīpurS 1.3cd ← PādS *jp* 1.14ab; ŚrīpurS 1.6cd ← PādS *jp* 1.32ab; ŚrīpurS 1.10cd ← ĪS 1.18cd; ŚrīpurS 1.12 ← ĪS 1.19 (← PārS 1.57c-58b); ŚrīpurS 1.14-15 ← ĪS 1.24-25 (cf. PārS 1.76-77); ŚrīpurS 1.18-19b ← PādS *jp* 1.63-64b; ŚrīpurS 1.25-26 ← PādS *jp* 1.90-91; ŚrīpurS 1.27ab ← PādS *jp* 1.96cd; ŚrīpurS 1.28-29 ← PādS *jp* 1.97-98. Additionally, the first chapter of the ŚrīpurS shares a noteworthy parallel verse, explaining the meaning of the term “Pāñcarātra”, with the *Mārkaṇḍeyasamhitā* (MārKS): ŚrīpurS 1.6c-7b ↔ MārKS 1.22c-23b. The MārKS may be more or less contemporary with the ŚrīpurS, though there are several clues that it is the earlier of the two works.

<sup>168</sup> See ŚrīpurS 1.29ab: *śatam ekam athāṣṭau ca tantre ’smin viditaṃ mayā /* – “In this system (*tantra* ’smin), 108 [Tantras] are known by me.” Cf. PādS *jp* 1.98ab.

branches”,<sup>169</sup> is included beside the PādS’s declaration that “this Tantra, rooted in *śruti*, is an authority like the Kalpasūtras. There is no teaching superior to the Veda”.<sup>170</sup> I shall comment more on these opposing strategies in my discussion of the “original teaching” in the following chapters.

The only extant non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptural source that contains an original formulation of the “three jewels doctrine”, then, is the interpolated section of the JS entitled *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*. This fourteenth century work follows the PādS in invoking the memory of the sage Aupagāyana, said here to be a student (*adhīyāna*) of the Kāṇvī śākhā (JS *ap* 109ab) and it also prescribes the mixing (*vimiśrita*) of Vedic and celestial (*divya*) i.e. Pāñcarātriḥ mantras (JS *ap* 118). Having declared that the Jayākhyā is superior among the “three jewels” (*ratneṣu triṣv api śreṣṭhaṃ jayākhyāṃ tantram ucyate*, JS *ap* 108ab), Lord Varada (*varadarāja*), the narrator of this section, asserts:

*jayākhyenātha pādmena tantreṇa sahiteṇa vai // mūlavyākhyānarūpābhyāṃ samarcayatu mām sadā / na tantrasaṅkaro doṣas tantrayor anayor iha //* – “Thus, one should always worship me according to the Jayākhyā [Saṃhitā] *along with* the Pādma Tantra [i.e.] according to both forms - the root [text] and the commentary. Here, with regard to both Tantras, the defect is in *not* mixing the Tantras.” (JS *ap* 111c-112)

Thus, the apparently Mantrasiddhāntin author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* has found a way of incorporating the teaching of the “three jewels” whilst ensuring that the PādS, a work which belongs to the Mantrasiddhānta, is, *practically* speaking, as essential as those texts. Where the “mixing” of one Tantra with another is normally discouraged as a “defect” or a “fault” (*doṣa*), in this instance the defect is said to be that of following the JS without also following its “commentary”, the PādS. This case offers a good example, then, not to mention a more seamless process, of forming a single “Pāñcarātra canon”, of bringing together “canonical” systems from distinct Pāñcarātra traditions with the aim of subsuming them into a “single” tradition. This integrative strategy is a clear development from the Mantrasiddhāntin appropriation of the

<sup>169</sup> ŚrīpurS 1.14: *mahato vedavṛkṣasya mūlabhūto mahān ayam / ṛgādyāḥ skandhabhūtās te śākhābhūtās ca yoginaḥ //*.

<sup>170</sup> ŚrīpurS 1.26c-27a: *śrutimūlam idaṃ tantram pramāṇaṃ kalpasūtravat // vedāc chāstraṃ paraṃ nāsti... /*.

tradition of the Ekāyanaveda which we have met with in the ŚrīprśS. Indeed, unlike the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* and the ŚrīpurS, the ŚrīprśS contains no deliberate and sustained attempt to present the Pāñcarātra as a single, homogeneous system. Thus, for instance, in the same passage that incorporates the “three jewels claim”, the ŚrīprśS advises against “mixing” the Siddhāntas.<sup>171</sup> The more fully developed integrative approach of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* and the ŚrīpurS probably indicates that both of these works postdate the ŚrīprśS.

The inclusion of a canonical list of Pāñcarātra scriptures, which is found at the end of the ŚrīpurS’s first chapter as well as in several other predominantly late works, including an interpolated section of the PādS, also derives from this same integrative strategy. In addition to the PādS, the South Indian Pāñcarātra works which contain lists of Saṃhitās in their *śāstrāvatarāṇa* portions are the ŚrīpurS, the *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* (ViśS), the *Kapīñjalasaṃhitā*, the *Bhāradvājasaṃhitā*, the *Mārkaṇḍeyasaṃhitā* (MārKS), and the *Viṣṇutantra*. Each of these except for the *Viṣṇutantra*<sup>172</sup> claim that there are at least 108 Tantras or Saṃhitās,<sup>173</sup> but among them only the ViśS actually names 108.<sup>174</sup> In this text we are told that the extent of the Pāñcarātra Tantras amounts to “a thousand million verses (*grantha*)”, though this measure is said to increase and shorten in accordance with the course of the cosmic ages (*yuga*).<sup>175</sup>

Finally, I should mention a rather interesting list of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, which may be relatively early, and is quite distinct in its content from other lists. I refer to that found in the Śaiva *Śrīkaṇṭhī*, also known as the *Śrīkaṇṭhīyasaṃhitā*, a fragment of which was discovered by Alexis Sanderson in a manuscript of a Kashmirian ritual manual called the *Nityādisaṃgraha*. An unedited transcript of this fragment appears in the appendices of Hanneder (1998). The *Śrīkaṇṭhī*, which is quoted by Kṣemarāja (c.

<sup>171</sup> ŚrīprśS 49.479ab ↔ PārS 19.547cd → ĪS 21.584cd.

<sup>172</sup> The *Viṣṇutantra*, a late, unpublished Pāñcarātra text, lists 141 scriptures according to Schrader (1916: 5), and 154 scriptures according to Parampurushdas and Shrutiprakashdas (2002: 55).

<sup>173</sup> As Schrader (1916) has pointed out, the number 108 should be read as symbolic, reflecting as it does numerical conventions such as the enumeration of 108 Upaniṣads.

<sup>174</sup> The *Kapīñjalasaṃhitā* (1.14b-27) names 100 titles; in a very similar list (see Smith 1975), the *Bhāradvājasaṃhitā* (1.8b-22a) names 103; the ŚrīpurS (1.30-44a) names 105; the MārKS (1.43-59) names 91.

<sup>175</sup> ViśS 2.34: *eteṣāṃ granthasaṃkhyā ca śatakoṭipramāṇataḥ / yugakramavaśād vipra vṛddhiṃ hrāsaṃ ca gacchati ||*.

1000-1050), and was apparently known also to Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025), tells us that the Pāñcarātra amounts to “a thousand million [*śloka*s]”, that there are 116 Saṃhitās in total, that they are spoken by Viṣṇu, and that they explicate the teaching of the five times (*pañcakāla*).<sup>176</sup> It then names all 116 works (verses 53c-69). Among these, alongside familiar titles including the *Pauṣkarī*, *Jayā*, *Padmodbhavā*, *Paramā*, *Sātvatā*, *Sanatkaumārikā*, *Mārkaṇḍeyā*, and *Viṣvakṣenā*, are a number of titles which do not feature in other lists of Pāñcarātra scriptures. Such an extensive list of Pāñcarātra scriptures appears to be unique in the North Indian literature. Although a list of Pāñcarātra works is found also in the relatively early, and apparently North Indian *Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra*,<sup>177</sup> in this work, and in the virtually identical list is contained in the *Agnipurāṇa* (39.2c-5), only 25 original Pañcarātra Tantras are admitted.<sup>178</sup>

There are, in my view, several features of the *Śrīkaṇṭhī*'s list which may cause us to doubt whether it is as old as other parts of this text. Firstly, as just mentioned, it is much more extensive than any other list to have emerged in a North Indian work. Secondly, the importance it assigns to the teaching of the “five times” in the Pāñcarātra is rare in Kashmirian works of this period. The early Pāñcarātra scriptures which appear to have been authored in Kashmir themselves do not assign an especially prominent place to this teaching (see Rastelli 2000a). Thirdly, the fact that the tradition is called here ‘Pāñcarātra’, rather than ‘Pañcarātra’, is also very unusual. Although in South Indian works ‘Pāñcarātra’ gradually became the standard name for the tradition, it is much more commonly referred to as ‘Pañcarātra’ in the earlier literature.<sup>179</sup> Lastly, none of the recently discovered early Pāñcarātra works, namely the *Svāyambhuvapañcarātra*, the *Devāmṛtapañcarātra*, the *Mahālakṣmīsaṃhitā*, and the *Jayottaratantra*, are named in the list. If Sanderson (2009) is correct in his

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<sup>176</sup> *Śrīkaṇṭhī* 51c-52: *śatakoṭipravistīrṇaṃ pāñcarātraṃ pramāṇataḥ || tatra bhedaśataṃ pūrṇaṃ ṣoḍaśādhikam eva ca / viṣṇunā kathitaṃ devī pañcakālanidarśanam ||*.

<sup>177</sup> On the provenance and probable date of this text see Gonda (1977: 55), Rajan (1981: 34), and Rastelli (2007: 190).

<sup>178</sup> *Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra ādikāṇḍa* 2.1-10. This text is not available to me. See Smith (1975: 553) on the 25 original Tantras listed. Interestingly, neither the JS nor the SS feature among these.

<sup>179</sup> The *Svacchandatantra* (5.44c) provides a notable exception here.

judgement that these works were composed in or around Kashmir before the middle of the tenth century, then we would surely expect their inclusion.

### *iii.) Conclusions*

The canonical list of scriptures contained in the PārS is probably one of the earliest attempts in a South Indian Saṃhitā to enumerate and classify the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus. It is directly based on the hierarchy of teachings found in the SS, and the fact that it grades specific scriptures according to this hierarchy suggests that it is not derived from another canonical list. It is almost certainly older than the lists of Saṃhitās contained in other South Indian texts such as the PādS and the ViśS. Compared to these later lists, the PārS's list is very short, and the hierarchical scheme it employs has the effect of limiting the canon to only a handful of genuinely authoritative works. The tradition of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS very likely emerged within the Pāñcarātra tradition to which the authors of the PārS belonged, namely the Āgamasiddhānta. We know that these authors had the JS, SS and PauṣS in their possession, since they incorporated a good deal of material from all three works into the PārS. The fact that they present these three scriptures as being unique in their ability to confer *mokṣa* may indicate that these works were not, at that time, in the possession of the Āgamasiddhāntins' main Pāñcarātriya rivals. There is, as we have seen, no reason to believe that the authors of the PādS, for example, considered these works to be particularly important. Nonetheless, the idea of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS did later find its way into non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptures, as did also the idea of the Ekāyanaveda.

In the context of the ĀP I argued that Yāmuna's acceptance of the validity and authority of the Ekāyanaveda may have been motivated by the prominence of Āgamasiddhāntins at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam, where Yāmuna was an *ācārya*. Can we advance similar explanations for the non-Āgamasiddhāntin acceptance of the Ekāyanaveda in such texts as the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the PādS's



Caryāpāda and the ŚrīprśS? In other words, were these works also produced in environments in which the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas continued to exert a significant influence? This is a difficult question to answer at the present state of research, since the date and provenance of these texts is not clear.<sup>180</sup> The relatively small literary output of the Āgamasiddhānta suggests that they were not numerically dominant, and the available evidence, as we have seen, suggests that they congregated in the relatively small Vaiṣṇava temple towns of Śrīraṅgam and Melkote. Nonetheless, we may provisionally assume that Āgamasiddhāntin influence within the Pāñcarātra extended beyond these places. I will come back to the question of why the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra works began incorporating apparently Āgamasiddhāntin ideas in Chapters Eight and Nine, once I have explored these separate traditions in greater depth. For the time being, a preliminary and partial explanation might usefully focus on the fact that it seems to have been the Āgamasiddhāntins who were initially responsible for the formation and classification of the Pāñcarātra canon.

The climate of intra-Pāñcarātrika sectarianism attested to in such works as the PādS and the PārS appears, then, to have subsided, and been replaced by a culture wherein the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātrikas, as represented by such works as the PādS, the ŚrīpurS and the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, attempted to present a unified Pāñcarātra tradition. This is most clearly demonstrated in the extensive, non-hierarchical lists of Pāñcarātra scriptures referred to above. The attempt to integrate distinct Pāñcarātra traditions is observable already in Yāmuna's ĀP, but in the scriptural literature it is only in evidence at a later time, most probably subsequent to the composition of the PārS. The passages I have addressed in the ŚrīprśS appear to indicate that the non-Āgamasiddhānta appropriation of the idea of the Ekāyanaveda, and of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS, had already begun before the appearance, among the scriptural works, of conscious attempts, such as we find in the ŚrīpurS, to present a single, homogeneous Pāñcarātra system. Indeed, it may well be the case that by the time of the composition of the ŚrīpurS, the sectarian culture had already dissipated,

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<sup>180</sup> The ŚrīprśS's likely chronological position between the ĪS and texts such as the ŚrīpurS and the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* would place it most likely in the fourteenth century. Several commentators have linked the origin of the ŚrīprśS with Kumbakonam in present day Tamil Nadu, though this remains somewhat speculative (Raghavan 1969).

and that the “ecumenism” of this work reflected a new reality. It is certainly striking, as we will see in the following chapters, that the vast majority of the later Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās belong to the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra culture that is typified by the PādS, whereas the tradition that is represented in the PārS survives only in that work, in the ĪS, and in several apparently interpolated sections of earlier texts.



## PART TWO

### THE ORIGINAL TEACHING: LOCATING TEXTS AND TRADITIONS

#### *Introduction*

In her monograph on the *Paramasaṃhitā*, Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 37-41) asks a pertinent question: how were scriptural claims of divine authorship reconciled with the reality of the situation in which the scriptural texts were being re-worked by successive scholars? “How was such a process of re-working possible?” she asks. “How could a text which claims to be the faithful record of god’s revelation be subjected to such manipulation?” She finds her answer, at least with regard to the *Paramasaṃhitā*, in the text’s admission of multiple lines of transmission: “The admission that the text of a tradition is an intermediate transmission of the revelation opens up the possibility of re-working it”, she writes. “Therefore the attitude towards the text was very special: the text presented the revelation, but as a record of the revelation and not the revelation itself it could be subjected to change.”

Such an attitude towards the text is not, of course, unique to the Pāñcarātra. Epic and Purāṇic literature commonly presents itself also as an “intermediate transmission” in which a narrator, as distinct from the original author, recounts a story or sequence of events first heard elsewhere. Thus, in the opening *adhyāya* of the first book (*ādiparvan*) of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* (MBh) the bard Ugraśravas is presented as the epic’s narrator whilst its authorship is attributed to the seer (*ṛṣi*) Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.<sup>181</sup> The same Vyāsa is also frequently credited with the

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<sup>181</sup> The problematic question of Vyāsa’s “authorship” in the MBh’s presentation of itself is addressed by Fitzgerald (2003), who discusses “how little the *MBh* itself seems to regard [Vyāsa as its author]” (ibid.: 817). However, as Fitzgerald points out in the same review, the Ugraśravas and Vaiśampāyana framing passages do present Vyāsa as the author, or at least the *original* reciter (MBh 1.1.9), of the MBh. See also, for example, MBh 1.1.19, 191, and 205.

composition of the Purāṇas,<sup>182</sup> many of which are narrated by either Ugraśravas or his father Lomaharṣaṇa. Likewise, it is not Vālmīki, the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, who recites his own composition in the Sanskrit epic, but rather his pupils Lava and Kuśa, the twin sons of Rāma. This narrative technique whereby the original author of the text is distanced from its (re-)telling by a chain of transmission (*paramparā* or *vaṃśa*), is also used quite frequently in the Śaiva scriptural literature.<sup>183</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, it is even encountered in an early Upaniṣad.<sup>184</sup> It is a device which helps to establish the ancient pedigree of a text, and to ground it in a clearly delineated oral tradition,<sup>185</sup> but it also establishes the text's status as providing "a record of the revelation", and as thereby being "subject to change".

The Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās employ a variety of techniques to establish their own "intermediate" status. A common strategy, found also in the epic, Purāṇic and Śāstric literature,<sup>186</sup> involves the claim that the *present* form of the text is a condensation of its *original* form. Thus, in the opening chapter of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (1.70-75), we are told that the current Saṃhitā comprises the essence (*sāra*) of an original teaching which ran to 15 million (*sārdhakoṭi*) śloka. Likewise, in the opening chapter of the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (jp 1.31-34) we learn that the current Saṃhitā is a much shorter version of the 15 million śloka taught to Brahmā by Keśava. In the *Lakṣmītantra* (44.52), Lakṣmī declares that the present version of the text is but the essence of the original *Lakṣmītantra* which consisted of a thousand million (*śatakoṭi*) śloka. The *Paramasaṃhitā* (1.45c-47) also claims that its present form comprises merely the essence of its original form which consisted of "a hundred thousand chapters" (*adhyāyalakṣam*). Meanwhile, the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (1.70c-73) contains the claim that it originally consisted of 240 *adhyāyas* before it was shortened to its present 60, while the 30-chapter *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* (1.50-52) declares that its original version

<sup>182</sup> See, for example, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 1.3.40-1; *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 3.6.15ff; *Agnipurāṇa* 271.11ff; and *Vāyupurāṇa* 61.55ff. Information from Rocher (1986: 45ff).

<sup>183</sup> See, for instance, the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* (1.1-14), the *Svacchandatantra* (SvT) (8.27ff), and the *Parākhyatantra* (3.1-6).

<sup>184</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 2.6.1-3; 4.6.1-3; 6.5.1-4.

<sup>185</sup> Doniger (1993a: 32) writes that "Epic and Purāṇic tradition (*smṛti*) defines itself by the chain of human memory, displaying each link as publicly as possible."

<sup>186</sup> See Pollock (1985: 512-513), who provides examples from the MBh (12.59.13ff), the *Matsyapurāṇa* (53.3-11), Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*, the *Mānasāra* and the *Carakaśaṃhitā* among others.

contained 108 chapters. In each instance this abridgement of the original teaching is presented as having taken place in order to benefit the recipients of the teaching.

In the following, I analyse the varying ways in which Pāñcarātra authors derived the legitimacy of their own textual tradition from a text or a body of texts which, whether real or imagined, lay outside the canonical boundaries *of that tradition*. In other words, I shall be addressing Pāñcarātrika methods of appeal to transcendent textual sources. In particular, I intend to ask what such practices can tell us about the traditions in question. Why should one tradition favour this legitimating textual source over that one? In Chapter Four I address the idea that the Pāñcarātra teachings are “rooted in the Veda” (*vedamūlatva*). The majority of South Indian texts at my disposal subscribe to this idea, and I present an overview of the methods used by these works in their attempts to locate themselves within a tradition which is continuous with that of the Veda. In contrast to these, certain other Pāñcarātra texts, as we have seen above, make the claim that their scriptures are rooted in an original teaching called ‘Ekāyanaveda’. In Chapter Five I explore the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda, attempting to gather together textual clues as to the context of its emergence. Finally, in Chapter Six I address the idea of the original teaching found in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, and the ways in which this work legitimates the Pāñcarātra tradition *in toto* by appeal to the *Nārāyaṇīya*.



#### 4. The Pāñcarātra and the Veda

##### i.) Vedamūlatva

How do the Pāñcarātra scriptures define themselves in relation to the Veda? Are there common approaches to this question among those works which do not appeal to the Ekāyanaveda? And do largely earlier texts such as the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS) and *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS) utilise similar methods to the Saṃhitās composed in South India? As we will see in the following, one of the most frequently used strategies in the later, South Indian works is the claim that the original form of the teaching upon which the present work is based is none other than the Veda itself. Of course, acceptance of this claim would satisfy the well-known Mīmāṃsaka criterion for a source of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) relating to *dharma*. In his *Tantravārttika* (TV), on 1.3.4 (328.14ff), the sixth century<sup>187</sup> Mīmāṃsaka philosopher Kumārila had employed the *vedamūlatva* principle to argue *against* the validity of the Pāñcarātras, whose treatises (*nibandhana*) he grouped together with those of the Sāṃkhyas, Yogas, Pāśupatas, Buddhists (*śākya*) and Jains (*nirgrantha*). Each of these Kumārila declared “contrary to the triple Veda” (*trayīviparīta*), and “not accepted by those who know the triple Veda” (*etāni trayīvidbhir na parigrhītāni*). Over a century later, the Pāñcarātra tradition’s non-conformity with the Veda was also affirmed by Śaṅkara. In his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (BSBh) on 2.2.45 (418.1-5), Śaṅkara claims that there are a number of doctrinal issues on which the Pāñcarātra teaching is in conflict with the Veda (*vedavipratīṣedha*).

According to currently accepted chronologies, both Kumārila and Śaṅkara lived long before the composition of our earliest Pāñcarātra scriptural sources. It is, for this reason alone, difficult to estimate the effect that these thinkers’ criticisms might have

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<sup>187</sup> Vincent Eltschinger (2010) refers to Helmut Krasser’s forthcoming article “How to Teach a Buddhist Monk to Refute the Heretics? Bhāvivēka’s relationship to Kumārila and Dharmakīrti”. In this article, Krasser places Kumārila in the sixth century. I am very grateful to Dr. Eltschinger for providing me with a copy of his own article.



had on Pāñcarātra traditions themselves. Having said this, it seems somehow unlikely that Śaṅkara's rejection of the Pāñcarātra's compatibility with the Veda would have significantly influenced developments *within* the Pāñcarātra, not least because it is based on a philosophical position and an interpretation of the Veda which our earliest Pāñcarātra authors do not appear to have shared.<sup>188</sup> If the Pāñcarātrika response to Mīmāṃsaka criticism in later South India is anything to go by, however, it seems probable that Kumārila's attack on the credibility of the Pāñcarātra would have elicited a more significant reaction. For Kumārila's rejection of the Pāñcarātra's validity is based not on a few metaphysical distinctions but, as with Yāmuna's Mīmāṃsaka opponent in the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (ĀP), on their entire methodology, and on their sociocultural status, which Kumārila claims lies "outside the Veda" (*vedabāhyah*, TV 330.17).

As it stands, there is no evidence either way for a direct Pāñcarātrika response to Kumārila or to Śaṅkara. At any rate, as we will see shortly, these thinkers' criticisms of the Pāñcarātra appear to have had little influence on the authors of the earliest Saṃhitās, who quite openly announce their own teachings' superiority to the Veda.<sup>189</sup> But we might tentatively suppose that certain formal features of the Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition – the terminology borrowed from Vedic ritual (*yāga*, *ijyā*, etc.), the fact that the works are written in Sanskrit, normally in the *anuṣṭubh* metre, that they are called *saṃhitā* – may have been motivated by a desire to counter the sort of attitude displayed by Kumārila. Of course, judging by the evidence provided in Yāmuna's ĀP, and also in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta's play *Āgamaḍambara* (ĀḌ), these strategies were not wholly successful. In the latter (ĀḌ 4.3), for instance, a "Vedic officiant" (*rtvik*) names the Pāñcarātrikas alongside the Śaivas, Pāśupatas, Sāṃkhyas, Buddhists (*saugata*) and Digambara Jains as members of "heterodox

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<sup>188</sup> The JS, SS and PauṣS are in no sense "philosophical" texts, and nor do they articulate a consistent metaphysics. However, each of them generally inclines more towards the position of "difference and non-difference" (*bhedābheda*), than towards Śaṅkara's type of "non-dualism" (*advaita*). On Bhedaḥbheda in the JS see Rastelli (1999); in the SS, see below.

<sup>189</sup> This apparent lack of influence is hardly surprising given the distance in time between these thinkers and the composition of the Saṃhitās. Inevitably, geography may also have been a factor. Śaṅkara was almost certainly from South India (Lorenzen 1983: 156). Kumārila was probably also from the south, though this is less certain (Taber 2007: 390). As I have stated above, the JS, SS and PauṣS were all probably *initially* composed in North India.

religions” (*bāhyāgamā*, Dezső 2005: 193), voicing his annoyance “that these Pāñcarātrika Bhāgavatas should adopt brahminical manners” (Āḍ 4.11, trans. Dezső 2005: 195).<sup>190</sup> Several centuries after Kumārila, then, the Pāñcarātra continued to attract criticism from orthodox outsiders who saw themselves as the genuine representatives and custodians of Vedic tradition. But the very fact that Pāñcarātrikas could acquire the support of a non-Vaiṣṇava Brahmin such as Jayanta indicates, at least, that by the time of the composition of our earliest Saṃhitās, they had become, in Sanderson’s (1985: 208 n. 3) words, “well-connected”. Indeed, this is conveyed quite clearly in the Āḍ itself, when the Vedic officiant grudgingly remarks that Queen Sugandhā is reported to be sympathetic (*sānukrośā*) towards the Bhāgavatas (i.e. the Pāñcarātrikas), and that a royal minister (*rājapuruṣa*) shows favour to them (Āḍ 4.19).<sup>191</sup>

Unfortunately, at present we know very little about the precise context in which the earliest Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās were written. Sanderson (2009: 58ff) has recently drawn attention to evidence suggesting that the Pāñcarātra received royal patronage during the Kārkoṭa dynasty (c. 626-855 CE) of Kashmir, and that it went into decline in that region shortly thereafter, as royal preference shifted to the Śaivism of the Mantramārga. According to Sanderson (ibid.: 61), it is highly probable that the Pāñcarātra produced its earliest extant works while “in the shadow of Śaivism”, and that these texts are “the product of a thorough reformation in which Vaiṣṇavas followed the example of the already flourishing Śaiva Mantramārga in order to provide themselves with a substantially new ritual system that would enable them to compete more effectively with their rivals.” Elsewhere, Sanderson (2005: 232 n. 3) notes that the most prominent among these rivals, namely the Śaiva Saiddhāntikas, “came to be widely accepted as co-religionists in traditional brahmanical circles”, and that this is attested to, for example, in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s *Nyāyamañjarī*. How did

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<sup>190</sup> Dezső’s translation of the Vedic officiant’s complaints at Āḍ 4.11 continues thus: “They [Pāñcarātrikas] mix with brahmins and have no scruples about using the form of greeting that only we may use to our equals. They recite the Pāñcarātra scriptures with a special pattern of accented syllables, as if they were taking the text of Veda as their example. “We are brahmins,” they say of themselves, and demand that others speak of them in the same way.”

<sup>191</sup> Sugandhā, queen consort of the ruling Śaṅkaravarman, would later briefly become regent (904-906 CE), though I am not aware of any evidence that Pāñcarātrikas benefitted from this.

the Saiddhāntikas acquire this status? This is an important question for our own purposes since, as Jayanta and Yāmuna show, it is precisely this recognition that Pāñcarātrikas craved. If the Pāñcarātra remodelled itself in accordance with Śaiva norms, then, we can assume that their strategies coincided to some degree with those of the Saiddhāntikas. Here it is worth quoting Sanderson's (2005: 231-232) summary of the latter:

[T]he Śaivism of the Mantramārga developed in practice a thorough accommodation of the brahmanical religion that it claimed to transcend, thus minimizing, even eliminating, the offense it gave as a tradition whose scriptures, like those of the Buddhists, were seen to be, and claimed to be, outside the corpus of the Vedas. These Śaivas were to accept that the brahmanical tradition alone was valid in the domain it claimed for itself and that they were bound to follow its prescriptions and incorporate its rituals beside their own wherever practicable.

With regard to the early Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, this method of accommodation is perhaps most strikingly evident in the inclusion in the daily liturgy of a fire-sacrifice based on the Vedic model (e.g. JS 15, SS 6.76-168b, PauṣS 28.1-29.61). Indeed, as Rastelli (2000a) has pointed out, there are numerous correspondences between the daily religious duties of Pāñcarātrikas, and those of the “orthoprax” Smārta householders. However, such methods of accommodation and appropriation do not, in the earlier works, represent an attempt to situate their own religious practices within the domain of Vedic ritualism. For there is, in addition, a large repertoire of supernumerary duties, the performance of which can lead to higher accomplishments than are available to those who practise only the Smārta rites. This idea is introduced at the very beginning of the JS, during the narration of the transmission of the teaching (*śāstrāvatarāṇa*). Here, when the sage Saṃvartaka asks his father Aurva how rebirth in *saṃsāra* can be avoided, Aurva tells him that long ago, in the Kṛta Age, he had sought the same goal by practising austerities alongside sages learned in the Veda and its auxiliary disciplines (*vedāṅga*, JS 1.7). After many thousands of years of unproductive asceticism, a great voice had told them that performing sacrifices, studying the Veda, giving gifts, and undertaking various rites and vows such as the Cāndrāyana fast etc., would not lead to liberation from bondage, even

after ten million *yugas*, without knowledge of the supreme god (JS 1.8-16).<sup>192</sup> This knowledge is made available in the following teaching.

The Veda's inability to lead its practitioners towards liberation is also expressed in the *śāstrāvatarāṇa* portions of later works, including the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS 1.3-4) and the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS jp 1.2-9). The primary purpose of this claim, no doubt, is that it serves as a justification for an additional system of rites, while at the same time conveying the superiority of the Pāñcarātra teaching. But the way in which the claim is articulated, which is fairly consistent across texts, also serves another important purpose. It conveys the notion that those who undertake initiation into the Pāñcarātra have already been initiated into the Veda, but have been unable to achieve their goal/s within that system. In this way, the Pāñcarātra is presented as an additional, higher teaching for Vedic initiates who desire additional and higher goals. The passage from the JS which I summarised above might not belong to the oldest parts of that text, but the general idea it expresses (if not its single-minded prioritisation of liberation over other accomplishments) can also be found, for example, in the SS. In the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of this work, which is devoted to the general rules for initiates, it is announced that “the content (or ‘meaning’) of the teaching is revealed to devotees who have undergone initiation (*dīkṣā*). And for the others, there is the Dharmaśāstra” (or, as Alaśiṅgabhāṭṭa, the SS's later commentator puts it “only the Dharmaśāstra”, *kevaladharmasāstram*, STBh p. 509).<sup>193</sup> The later *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (AS) even draws on orthodox Brahminical tradition to express a similar point. Here, it is said that the Vedic initiation (*upanayana*) represents a “second birth”, whereas initiation into the Pāñcarātra (*yajñadīkṣā*) is the “third birth”.<sup>194</sup>

The earliest of the published *Samhitās* situate themselves above the Veda. What is more, we can be certain that earlier Pāñcarātrikas, whose texts have not survived,

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<sup>192</sup> Compare JS 1.11 with *Bhagavadgītā* 11.48ab.

<sup>193</sup> SS 21.42abc (→ ĪS 22.38abc): *bhaktānāṃ kṛtadīkṣāṇāṃ vyaṅgyaḥ śāstrārtha eva hi / anyeṣāṃ dharmasāstram ca... //*

<sup>194</sup> AS 15.36c-37b: *ācāryāj janma sāvitryāṃ dvitīyaṃ divyam iṣyate // te trayo yajñadīkṣāyāṃ janma prāpya tṛtīyakam /*. Cf. *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2.169: *mātur agre 'dhijananam dvitīyaṃ mauñjibandhane / tṛtīyaṃ yajñadīkṣāyāṃ dvijasya śruticodanāt //*. See also *Nāradyasaṃhitā* 29.20: *evam bhāgavato vedam upanīto 'bhyased guroḥ / tatas tu dīkṣāṃ samprāpya pañcarātram samabhyaset //*

also held this position, for it is explicitly criticised by Śaṅkara in his BSBh.<sup>195</sup> It is also, as we will see in Chapter Seven, continuous with methods of classification found in the younger parts of the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Although the earliest Saṃhitās present themselves notionally as higher teachings for those who are already eligible for Vedic instruction, in reality, as we will see below, they appeal to a considerably broader social audience, and they do not claim to be “rooted in the Veda”. As far as I am aware, the earliest articulation of the idea that the Pāñcarātra is rooted in the Veda is contained in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s late ninth or early tenth century philosophical drama the *ĀḌ*. Here, the eminent Naiyāyika scholar known as Dhairyaśi argues that “statements of the Pañcarātra and other such [traditions] are valid (*prāmāṇyahetuḥ*) because they are rooted in the Veda (*vedamūlatā*)” (*ĀḌ* 4.147). In South India, this became a common theme. Yāmuna’s *ĀP* (e.g. 7.12-14) demonstrates clearly in its *pūrvapakṣa* section that the *vedamūlatva* principle was, by this time, already well established within the Pāñcarātra. Yāmuna’s own response to his Mīmāṃsaka opponent’s denial that the Pāñcarātra is rooted in the Veda is as follows:

*sa khalu bhagavān amoghasahajasaṃvedanasākṣādbhavadakhilavedarāśir  
viprakīrṇavividhavidhyarthavādamantrātmakānekaśākhādhyayanadhāraṇādiṣv  
adhīradhiyo bhaktān avalokya tadanukampayā laghunopāyena tadarthaṃ  
saṃkṣipyopadideśeti.* – “The Lord, for whom the entire collection of the Vedas is immediately present on account of his innate and unerring perception, upon seeing that his devotees were not sufficiently concentrated in their minds for studying and remembering the multiple recensions with their diverse and scattered injunctions, explanations and mantras, out of compassion [for his devotees] abridged its content in a succinct manner, and taught it thus.” (*ĀP* 102.6-9)

Here, then, we see a clear articulation of what the Pāñcarātra’s being “rooted in the Veda” entails for Yāmuna. The singular Pāñcarātra teaching is a concise summary or “abridgement” of the vast and disordered collection of Vedic recensions (*śākhā*). This abridgement has been authored by God, and elsewhere (e.g. *ĀP* 39.1-7, 60.5ff, 84.1-3) Yāmuna has already shown that Viṣṇu’s reliability is vouched for in

<sup>195</sup> BSBh on 2.2.45 (418.4-5): *vedavipratīṣedhaś ca bhavati – caturṣu vedeṣu paraṃ śreyo ’labdhvā śāṇḍilya idaṃ śāstram adhigatavān ityādivedanindādarśanāt* / . – “And there is conflict with the Veda, for it is seen that the Veda is censured in statements such as “Not finding the supreme good in the four Vedas, Śāṇḍilya learnt this teaching (i.e. Pāñcarātra).”

the unauthored (*apauruṣeya*) Vedas themselves. This application of the *vedamūlatva* principle represents a significant development from formulations found in the Pūrvamīmāṃsā. In that tradition, the authority of “remembered” (*smṛti*) texts and practices which are “rooted in the Veda” is conferred by “texts inferentially proven to exist” i.e. “Vedic texts for one reason or another not accessible to us” (Pollock 1997: 404, 407). By contrast, Yāmuna’s Pāñcarātra is “rooted in the Veda” in the sense that it is a reformulation (by God, no less) not merely of various scattered injunctions (see *ibid.*: 409), or of a lost or otherwise inaccessible Vedic text or recension, but of “the entire Vedic corpus” (*akhilavedarāśiḥ*).

Turning to the Pāñcarātra scriptures themselves, we find the same idea in the opening chapter of the *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* (ViśS), a presumably late, South Indian work which is not referred to by Vedāntadeśika, and so may well postdate him. Here, at ViśS 1.73-79, we are told that the Vedas were a source of confusion and that to remedy this, Nārāyaṇa condensed their content, the resulting abridgement being the “knowledge called Pāñcarātra” (*pañcarātrāhvayaṃ jñānam*), said to be the “absolute essence of the content (or ‘meaning’) of the Vedas” (*vedārthasārasarvasvam*). Of course, this idea that the Pāñcarātra teaching constitutes a condensed version or abridgement (*saṃkṣepa*) of the Vedas carries with it the implication that, being shorter and easier to understand, it is actually an *improvement* on these texts. As we have seen, it was precisely this implied claim that was offered as evidence for the Pāñcarātra tradition’s “non-Vedic” status by Śaṅkara in his BSBh (418.1-5, on 2.2.45). It is also directly referred to by Yāmuna’s imagined Mīmāṃsaka opponent in the ĀP (102.14ff).<sup>196</sup> In fact, in the fourteenth century, Vedāntadeśika (e.g. PRR 25.8ff) was still having to defend the Pāñcarātra against the accusation that they censured the Veda, and considered their own system to be superior.

Of the works available to me, it is only among the later, post-Yāmuna Saṃhitās that we encounter evidence of the *vedamūlatva* principle being explicitly incorporated into modes of scriptural self-understanding.<sup>197</sup> With the exception of the

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<sup>196</sup> Yāmuna himself makes sure that he is not misunderstood on this point – for him the Pāñcarātra and the Veda are equally authoritative (*pañcarātraśrutyoh ekārthyam eva pratīyate*, ĀP 105.3).

<sup>197</sup> However, a verse conveying the *vedamūlatva* principle which is quoted without attribution by Yāmuna at ĀP 102.11-12 is also quoted by Rāmānuja in his ŚrīBh (332.15-19) alongside verses from

ViśS, these Saṃhitās tend to utilise a considerably more moderate version of the *vedamūlatva* idea – one that, at least ostensibly, reverses the notion that the Veda is inferior to the Pāñcarātra. Perhaps one of the earliest clear expressions of such an idea within the scriptural corpus is the declaration, found in both the PādS (*jp* 1.91cd) and the *Viṣvaksenasamhitā* (ViśS 8.5ab), that it is “rooted in *śruti*, and is an authority like the Kalpasūtras” (*śrutimūlam idaṃ tantraṃ pramāṇaṃ kalpasūtravat*). As we have seen, the same verse is found in the later *Śrīpuruṣottamasamhitā* (ŚrīpurS),<sup>198</sup> and it also occurs in the presumably later *Mārkaṇḍeyasamhitā* (MārKS).<sup>199</sup> The claim in each of these works that they are equivalent in status to the Kalpasūtras is a rather humble retreat from earlier declarations (at e.g. PauS 38.307c-309) that the Pāñcarātra is superior to the Veda. These younger Saṃhitās most likely compare themselves to the late ancillary (*aṅga*) Vedic Sūtras on the solemn (*śrauta*) and domestic (*grhya*) rites, and the rules for proper behaviour (*dharma*), which were universally categorised as Smṛti texts by this period (Witzel 2003: 87), in order to convey the idea that they are merely “ritual handbooks” which represent no great challenge to Vedic orthopraxy – indeed, they are continuous with that orthopraxy.

A similar claim is found in the *Viṣṇusamhitā* (ViṣṇuS). N. P. Unni (1991: 7-10), in his long introduction to the printed edition of this text, suggests that the ViṣṇuS was authored by a Keralan Brahmin before, or during, the fourteenth century. He arrives at this *terminus ad quem* on the basis that the *Tantrasamuccaya*, which he says can be dated to the fourteenth century (though several scholars, see e.g. Ślāczka 2010, in fact date it to the fifteenth), is indebted to the ViṣṇuS. The ViṣṇuS, which is strikingly “non-sectarian” in its outlook, calls itself a ‘Tantra’ (ViṣṇuS 2.1), which it

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the ParS (1.3-4). The ParS is quoted by Yāmuna, and so predates him. However, the verse in question is not found in the present version of the ParS. The verse reads: *vedānteṣu yathāsāraṃ saṃgrhya bhagavān hariḥ / bhaktānukampayā vidvān saṃcikṣepa yathāsukham //*. – “The omniscient Lord Hari, after taking the essence of the Upaniṣads, out of compassion for his devotees condensed it for their benefit.”

<sup>198</sup> ŚrīpurS 1.26cd. Here the verse appears to have been drawn directly from the PādS. Note, also, ŚrīpurS 1.27cd ↔ MārKS 1.42cd.

<sup>199</sup> MārKS 1.38ab. In this instance too, the verse appears to have been borrowed directly from the PādS, since the ensuing verses are also contained in the earlier work (MārKS 1.39-42b ← PādS *jp* 1.93c-96). My assumption that the MārKS is later than the PādS is based upon the reasons articulated in Smith (1975: 328) and Gonda (1977: 106). The ViśS, meanwhile, may be more or less contemporary with the PādS (Matsubara 1994: 35).

defines etymologically as “that by which all things are accomplished and people are protected from danger” (*sarve ’thā yena tanyante trāyante ca bhayāj janāḥ*, ViṣṇuS 2.10cd). According to ViṣṇuS 2.20, there are five subdivisions of ‘Tantra’, each distinguished from the other on the basis of their having different speakers (*vakṭṛ*). The five distinct Tantras are named as Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Brāhma, Saura, and Kaumāra. The ViṣṇuS argues that “because it is rooted in the Veda, or rather in [the authority of] reliable persons (*āpta*), Tantra is an authoritative source of knowledge like the Purāṇas or like the statements of Manu and others.”<sup>200</sup> A few verses later, this position is explained when the ViṣṇuS adopts the Naiyāyika view (which is contrary to that held by Yāmuna) that the Veda, like the Tantra, is itself an authoritative source of knowledge because it derives from a reliable person (*āptamūlatā*, i.e. God).<sup>201</sup> Because Viṣṇu is a teacher of *dharma* (*dharmappravakṭṛ*), we are told, what is said by him is akin to the statements of Manu (*manuvākyavat*, ViṣṇuS 2.21ab).

The ViṣṇuS is one of many late South Indian Pāñcarātra works which explicitly enjoin the concurrent use of “Vedic” (*vaidika*) and “Tantric” (*tāntrika*) mantras.<sup>202</sup> Other scriptures which presumably belong to a similar period (i.e. 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, or possibly even later), and which also enjoin what the *Nārādīyasamhitā* (NārS) calls “mixed worship” (*miśrārcana*, 2.63ab), include the ViśS,<sup>203</sup> the *Śrīpraśnasamhitā* (ŚrīprśS),<sup>204</sup> and the ŚrīpurS.<sup>205</sup> Among the apparently earlier (pre-Vedāntadeśika) South Indian works which openly prescribe a “mixed” (*miśra*, *vyāmiśra*) form of worship, we can count the PādS, the *Bhārgavatantra* (BhT),<sup>206</sup> the NārS, the *Viṣvaksenasamhitā* (ViśS),<sup>207</sup> the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT),<sup>208</sup> and the *Sanatkumārasamhitā*

<sup>200</sup> ViṣṇuS 2.11c-12b: *vedamūlatayā tantraṃ āptamūlatayāthavā // purāṇavat pramāṇaṃ syāt tathā manvādivākyavat /*.

<sup>201</sup> ViṣṇuS 2.19: *āptaproktatayā tantraṃ pramāṇam iti ye viduḥ / vedaprāmāṇyam apy āhur āptamūlatayaiva te //*. The idea that the Vedas are authored by Viṣṇu is, unsurprisingly, common in the later Pāñcarātra works. Elsewhere see e.g. ViśS 4.34.

<sup>202</sup> See for example ViṣṇuS 4.18c-19, and 29.38-51b, 83.

<sup>203</sup> See the list of Vedic mantras in the printed edition of the ViśS p. 298. At ViśS 6.2ff, knowledge of the *ṛṣi* and *chandas* elements (6.10ab) of the *praṇava* mantra is declared to be a prerequisite for this mantra’s successful employment.

<sup>204</sup> See e.g. ŚrīprśS 16.34. For a list of the Vedic mantras used in the ŚrīprśS, see Padmanabhan’s (1969) appendix to the printed edition of the text.

<sup>205</sup> See e.g. ŚrīpurS 19.12c-13, 22.46ff and 24.41ff.

<sup>206</sup> See e.g. BhT 24.17-18, 27cff.

<sup>207</sup> See ViśS 8.3c-6, 12.1ff, 13.1-12, 13.34ff, 20.343ff, 31.7-9, 39.316 etc.

<sup>208</sup> See LT 11.49, and especially chapters 28-29 and 49-50. See also Gupta (2000: 391).



(SanS).<sup>209</sup> In the scriptural literature that is available to me, the claim that the Pāñcarātra teaching is “rooted in the Veda” is one that is made exclusively by Pāñcarātrikas who practise what they call “mixed worship”. As we have seen in previous chapters, the PādS claims that this kind of worship is restricted to Pāñcarātrikas who belong to the tradition called ‘Mantrasiddhānta’. Among later works, the BhT (22.88, 24.17-50), the ŚrīprśS (16.31c-34), and the Mārks<sup>210</sup> all associate themselves with this tradition. In the following, I attempt a brief and, inevitably, preliminary overview of the ways in which Pāñcarātra texts authorising mixed worship attempted to present themselves as being in conformity with Vedic tradition, while nonetheless avoiding some of the restrictions which a genuine conformity would have entailed.

ii.) “Vedification” in the South Indian Pāñcarātra

In an article devoted to the referent of the term *dharma* in the Dharmasūtras, Albrecht Wezler (2004) explores the manner in which “the *dharma* of the Dharmaśāstra” is presented as having been “extracted” from the Veda. Addressing the opening two verses of the *Gautamadharmasūtra* (GDh), Wezler argues that there is a clear distinction presupposed between the Vedic *dharma*, on the one hand, and “the *dharma* of the Dharmaśāstra” on the other. It is the latter, says Wezler, to which Gautama refers in the phrase “the Veda is the root of *dharma*” (*vedo dharmamūlam*, GDh 1.1). According to Wezler, this statement, together with the second verse, which he translates as “and tradition as well as practice of those who know it (that is, the Veda), [are the root of *dharma*]”, is a clear sign of a process of “Vedification”, which he explains as meaning “in the first place the development of the *vedamūlatva* concept” (ibid.: 643-644).

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<sup>209</sup> See SanS *Brahmarātra* 4.68c-73, *Ṛṣirātra* 5.30c-40b, 7.1-73, 9.7-10, 22-24 etc.

<sup>210</sup> Mārks 1.26ab: *teṣv ayaṃ mantrasiddhānto mārkaṇḍeyākhyā īritaḥ* // - “Among these [Saṃhitās], this which is named Mārkaṇḍeya is said to be [a teaching of] the Mantrasiddhānta.”

“Vedification” is a useful term to apply to the processes at work in the South Indian Pāñcarātra scriptures which I have listed above. Inevitably, when applied to this much later literature, the concept of “Vedification” carries quite different implications from those intended by Wezler, for by the time of the composition of these works the term ‘Veda’ had a substantially broader scope of reference than in Gautama’s day. The enlargement of the Vedic canon in the intervening centuries was itself, of course, largely an outcome of the application of the *vedamūlatva* principle (see especially Halbfass 1991 and Pollock 1997). Needless to say, when I use Wezler’s term in reference to the Pāñcarātra, I do not mean to identify the ‘Veda’ of the Dharmasūtras with the broader body of texts and practices by means of which the authors of the later Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās attempted to establish the legitimacy of their tradition.

Of course, we can see processes of Vedification in operation already in the earliest Saṃhitās, especially in certain formal features of the texts themselves and also in their incorporation of Vedic rituals into the daily practice of initiates. However, as we have seen, these works (I am thinking specifically here of the JS, SS and PauṣS) do not establish their own authority on the grounds that they are “rooted in the Veda”. The Pāñcarātrika method of accommodating or appropriating Vedic practices was no doubt intended to enhance its credibility in the eyes of outsiders, and to present Pāñcarātrika forms of worship as continuous with the more orthoprax systems. But the texts themselves, in their narrative portions, do not locate their own tradition within the Veda, or even as based upon it, as the later Saṃhitās do. Rather, Vedic practice, on the rare occasions it is explicitly identified as such, is presented as preliminary to, and subordinate to, a higher system of Viṣṇu worship.

The idea that the Pāñcarātra way of worship is superior to the Veda because it is soteriologically effective is clearly present among the later South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions which enjoin “mixed worship”, and it can still be found in their scriptures. Thus, in the opening chapter of the PādS (*jp* 1.92d-93), in a verse referred to previously, it is expressly said that the Pāñcarātra can grant liberation whereas the Veda (“the tree which possesses the Kalpasūtras”) cannot. However, this verse is followed very quickly by the qualifier “there is no teaching superior to the Veda”

(*vedaśāstrāt param nāsti*, PādS *jp* 1.96c). Such proclamations of deference towards the Veda, which seem rather perfunctory at times, and may have been added later in the last case, can be found increasingly often in the younger works. For example, clear signs of Vedification are evident in the NārS, a work which is quoted by Vedāntadeśika, and which therefore very probably predates such scriptures as the ĪS, ŚrīprśS, ViśS, Mārks, ViṣṇuS and ŚrīpurS.<sup>211</sup> The NārS teaches that the Pāñcarātra mantras are themselves Vedic: “Those mantras which are revealed here in the Pāñcarātra, they are all known to be Vedic. This secret called ‘Pāñcarātra’ is certainly Vedic, and the path of the Veda is manifested [here]”.<sup>212</sup> However, this verse occurs only very shortly after another in which the NārS rules that “whatever is not spoken of in detail [here], with regard to the [*saṃskāras*] beginning with the impregnation rite, that should always be performed by the wise according to the path which is taught in the Veda”.<sup>213</sup> This clearly gives priority to the Pāñcarātra system, or to the NārS itself, since the earlier part of this chapter (NārS 29.1-36b) explains in detail how the life-cycle rites (*saṃskāra*) should be performed. Of course, the inclusion of such passages is itself a sign of Vedification, but the implicit instruction here is that the NārS’s injunctions should replace those of the Veda, and that the latter should be consulted only for additional information.<sup>214</sup> This is counter to the position that was later taken up by Vedāntadeśika, namely that Pāñcarātrika rites are valid only when they address matters, such as the installation and worship of Viṣṇu’s icon in a temple, which are not contained in the Veda (PRR 21.7ff).

There are, to be sure, different degrees of Vedification. The Veda is frequently praised as the highest teaching in the late South Indian Pāñcarātra works, but often such claims appear to be doing little more than paying lip service or, as

<sup>211</sup> Vedāntadeśika cites a ‘Nārādīya’ on four occasions in his PRR. None of the verses quoted are found in the printed edition of the NārS, but on the first occasion (at PRR 16.19-20) the quoted verses are addressed to Gautama. Gautama is, along with Nārada, the principal interlocutor of the present version of the NārS. This makes it quite likely, then, that Vedāntadeśika had access to a different version of the same work.

<sup>212</sup> NārS 29.39-40b: *atra mantrās tu ye kecit pañcarātre prakāśitāḥ / te sarve vaidikāḥ jñeyāḥ rahasyaṃ vaidikaṃ tv idam // pāñcarātram iti khyātaṃ vedādhvaparakṛtām /*.

<sup>213</sup> NārS 29.36c-37b: *niṣekādīṣu sarvatra yad yad uktam avistaram // vedoditena mārgena tat tat kāryaṃ vipaścitā /*.

<sup>214</sup> Elsewhere, the NārS states that *either* the Vedic *or* the Pāñcarātrika life-cycle rites should be performed. NārS 11.81: *niṣekādīṣu tu saṃskārān vaidikāṃs tu samācaret / pāñcarātroditān vāpi evaṃ vaṃśair (corr. vaṃśer) anuṣṭhitān //*.

Louis Renou (1960: 2) has characterised such conventions, as offering “*un simple ‘coup de chapeau’ en passant*”. A good example of such an attitude is found in the ViśS (3.2-6b), where it is said that the Pāñcarātrika guru should be a Brahmin who is learned not only in the Vedas together with their auxiliary limbs (*sāṅgavedavit*), but also in the Nyāyaśāstra, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, and in the discipline of architecture, planning and construction (*vāstuśāstra*). There are many similar passages in other works, which I do not need to list here. But we also encounter what we might interpret as more “genuine” processes of Vedification. A good example of this can be found in the ViṣṇuS’s assertion that the initiate should always perform what is stipulated in the Dharmaśāstra in his own home, and that what is spoken of in the Tantras is in conformity with the laws relating to family (or clan, *kula*), social class (*varṇa*), and stage of life (*āśrama*).<sup>215</sup> Needless to say, this idea of the equivalence between Tantra and Dharmaśāstra, and the injunction for the initiate to adhere to the domestic rules of the latter, represents a somewhat radical revision of the SS’s earlier claim, referred to above, that the Dharmaśāstra is only for those who have not undergone initiation (*dīkṣā*). According to this prescription in the ViṣṇuS, then, initiation into the Pāñcarātra would not disturb one’s daily duties as a householder – a pledge which was no doubt intended to appeal to an audience who wished to maintain their Smārta obligations.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of genuine Vedification is the gradual change in scriptural attitudes towards social class (*varṇa*). In the earliest of the published Saṃhitās, the JS, SS and PauṣS, there are several passages which attest to a relatively open, socially inclusive policy regarding initiation and participation in the post-initiatory rites. In all three texts, initiation is unambiguously open to members of all four *varṇas* as well as to women. The JS states that “the whole world should be initiated!” (*dīkṣayen medinīm sarvam*, JS 16.10a), and this is shown to include “pure-minded” (*bhāvitātman*) women and children (JS 16.2ab). In the case of women this appears to mean that they must be virgins (*kanyakā*, JS 16.59c), of whom it is said that they are only able to undergo the initiation which grants “enjoyments” (*bhoga*)

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<sup>215</sup> ViṣṇuS 29.68: *svagrhye dharmasāstre ca yaduktam tat sadācaret / tantruktam aviruddham ca kulavarṇāśramānugam ||*.

and “perfections” (*siddhi*, JS 16.82) i.e. not liberation. Eligibility for initiation does not extend to the offspring of *pratiloma* marriages, i.e. wherein the man is of a lower social class than the woman (JS 18.19ab). Regarding the role of preceptor (*ācārya*), the JS (18.5c-9) rules that he should be a Brahmin, but that in the absence of a Brahmin, a Kṣatriya is competent to initiate Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, while in the absence of a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya may initiate Vaiśyas and Śūdras. A Śūdra, meanwhile, may initiate other Śūdras. In the JS’s chapter on the rites of reparation (*prāyaścitta*), however, we meet with a more orthodox attitude towards social class. Here, for example, a reparation rite is enjoined if one has eaten food that has been touched by a village hog, a vulture, a jackal, a monkey, a cockerel or a Śūdra – the “leftovers” of any of these are considered “contaminated”.<sup>216</sup> The same chapter prescribes the repetition of mantras (*japa*) as reparation for the intentional or unintentional killing of a woman, Śūdra or child (*strīśūdrabālakān hatvā...*, JS 25.108), and for entering the home of a Caṇḍāla, a washerman (*rajaka*) or a leather worker (*carmakāra*, JS 25.109c-112b).<sup>217</sup>

The present versions of the SS and the PauṣS do not contain similar passages on the reparation rites. Nor do they state that a Śūdra may act as preceptor to other Śūdras, but both clearly state that initiation is open to members of all four *varṇas* (e.g. SS 16.17-22, 19.42-45, PauṣS 1.35ab, 38.72), and both allow that women can be initiated (SS 19.6, PauṣS 1.34-36).<sup>218</sup> According to the SS (7.57-64), members of all *varṇas* who aspire to liberation only can perform the twelve year vow (*dvādaśavārṣikavrata*), though each *varṇa* must begin the vow at different times of the year. Regarding the rites of reparation (*prāyaścitta*), the SS (16.20-22) rules that the lower the *varṇa* of the initiate, the longer the rites must be performed in order to destroy whatever impurities (*kalmaṣa*) have accumulated. Elsewhere, it is mentioned that the different *varṇas* have their own mantras (*svamantra*, SS 18.9c-10b). However, all initiates (i.e. including Śūdras and women) appear to be eligible to

<sup>216</sup> JS 25.14-15: *viḍvarāhair atho grdhragomāyukapikukkuṭaiḥ / saṃsprṣṭam antyajenāpi śūdrādyucchiṣṭadūṣitam // abhojyānnaṃ tu vā bhuktivā sevītvā ’nyastriyaṃ tu vā / snātvā bhuktivā tv ahorātraṃ pañcagavyaṃ samācaret //*

<sup>217</sup> According to Manu (10.12, 16) a Caṇḍāla is the lowest Pratiloma i.e. the offspring of a Śūdra father and a Brahmin mother. He is, says Manu, “the worst of men” (*adhamo nṛṇām*, *ibid.*).

<sup>218</sup> In the SS (19.6), as in the JS, these women must be “pure minded” or “devout” (*bhāvitātman*).

receive the sacred thread (*upavīta*) at the end of the *bhūtaśuddhi* rite (SS 19.51c-52b),<sup>219</sup> and though Śūdras may not recite the mantric formulas *vauṣaṭ*, *svāhā* and *vaṣaṭ*, they can achieve the same effect (*kārya*) by reciting *namaḥ*.<sup>220</sup> In an earlier chapter (SS 2.7c-12b), as we have seen above, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are prohibited from worshipping the Vyūhas with mantras. Meanwhile, the PauṣS (27.131c-132) endorses the use of mantras with the *praṇava* (*om*) by Śūdras, provided they are suitable (*yogyatāvaśāt*), and by women, provided they are virtuous (*sadācāravaśāt*). In another passage of the PauṣS, which is largely incomprehensible due to the corrupt and lacunose text, it is nonetheless possible to discern the claim that there is no fault (*doṣa*) accrued when Brahmins who are learned in the Veda eat food which has been offered in worship by Śūdras.<sup>221</sup> In a later chapter, it is forbidden to give the food offered in worship (*naivedya*) to non-devotees (*abhakta*), “deniers” (*nāstika*), those of a wicked nature (*durātman*), women, Śūdras, animals and servants (PauṣS 31.197-199).

The JS and the PauṣS in particular contain passages which appear to express conflicting attitudes towards the Brahminical *varṇa* system. This is not especially surprising given that these are not homogeneous, singly authored works, but it is worth restating the presence of these inconsistencies in order to remind ourselves of the difficulty in speaking about these texts in “general” terms. Indeed, this is especially true of the JS and the PauṣS, both of which contain portions which appear to have been authored in South India, in a sociocultural context quite different from that of their presumably North Indian origins. It may be tentatively proposed that the more “orthodox” attitudes towards social class, such as those expressed in the passage from the PauṣS just referred to (i.e. PauṣS 31.197-199), and in the prescriptions for the reparation rites in JS 25, belong to the later portions of these works since, as we will see presently, such attitudes are found increasingly often in

<sup>219</sup> The *bhūtaśuddhi* rite consists of “the purification of the elements within the body [of the initiate]” (Flood 2006: 106). See also Flood (2000).

<sup>220</sup> SS 19.54c-55b: *vauṣaṭsvāhāvaṣaṭkāraṇiṣṭhānām tu pratikriyā // namaskāreṇa mantrāṇām kārye prāpte hy anugrahe /*.

<sup>221</sup> PauṣS 27.695c-697b: *śrotriyaṇām dvijendrāṇām tvadarthāśramavartinām // yadvad bhuktād dhaviś* (corr. Apte *dhavaś*) *śūdrān na doṣo jñānagauravāt / evaṃ svabhāvadīptānām nirmalānām sadaiva hi // na vai jātaṃ nānirmalyaṃ* (corr. Apte *na nirmalyaṃ*) *bhavec chūdraparigrahāt /*.

the later, South Indian *Samhitās*. It is worth noting in this context that Smith (1975: 130) has drawn attention to another verse in the JS's chapter on the reparation rites (JS 25.144) which, in his opinion, points to a South Indian provenance. Of course, palaeographic evidence would be required to conclusively determine whether sections of this chapter have indeed been inserted into older material.

In the South Indian works, then, there is a gradual but decisive shift in attitudes. The SanS, which may be one of the earliest extant South Indian scriptures since it is quoted by Yāmuna in his ĀP,<sup>222</sup> gives a good indication of this in the ninth chapter of the section called *Indrarātra*. Here, the following is said:

*ācāryagrahaṇe योग्याs trayo varṇā dvijātayaḥ / ācāryatvaṃ na śūdrās tu labhate jātucit kvacit // caturṇām api varṇānām ācāryo brāhmaṇo bhavet / tadālābhe kṣatriyas tu ācāryo vaiśyaśūdrayoḥ // brāhmaṇakṣatriyālābhe vaiśyaḥ syāc chūdrajanmanaḥ /* – “The three twice-born social classes are eligible to take up [the position] of *ācārya*. Śūdras are not permitted [to take up] the position of *ācārya* under any circumstances. Of the four social classes, a Brahmin should [ideally] be the *ācārya*. In the absence of him [i.e. a Brahmin], a Kṣatriya [can be] the *ācārya* for Vaiśyas and Śūdras. In the absence of a Brahmin and a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya can be [the *ācārya*] for one who is born of Śūdras.” (SanS *Indrarātra* 9.13-15b)

This is very similar to the passage from the JS (18.5c-9) referred to above, except that here the SanS removes the right for Śūdras to act as preceptors for other Śūdras. Several verses later, the SanS restates this prohibition, but with an *addenda*:

*brāhmaṇāc chūdrakanyāyāṃ jātaḥ śūdrottamas tu yaḥ / śūdrāṇām uttamaḥ so 'pi na cācāryatvaṃ arhati // śūdrottamasya kānyāyāṃ brāhmaṇād yas tu jāyate / kalpavaiśyas tu prokto vaiśyakalpo na saṃśayaḥ // sarveṣām api śūdrāṇām sa cācāryo bhaviṣyati /* – “One who is born of a daughter of a Śūdra, and a Brahmin, is the best of Śūdras. Even though he is the best of Śūdras, he is not able to be an *ācārya*. But one who is born of the daughter of [one who is] the best of Śūdras, and a Brahmin, he is called a Kalpavaiśya, and he is undoubtedly almost equal to a Vaiśya. He *can* be an *ācārya* to all Śūdras.” (SanS *Indrarātra* 9.24-26b)

Elsewhere, the SanS (*Ṛṣirātra* 5.30c-40b) prohibits Śūdras and women from entering into the *maṇḍala* (see Rastelli 2002a: 132-133), and warns that they should

<sup>222</sup> See ĀP 161.6 quoting SanS *Indrarātra* 9.2ab, and ĀP 162.1-4 quoting SanS *Indrarātra* 1.10c-11, 10ab.

only be initiated at certain times of the year (SanS *Indrarātra* 4.9). Nonetheless, like the JS, SS and PauṣS, it does allow that they may be initiated. The acceptance of Śūdras, but with these sorts of qualifications and prohibitions, is common in the South Indian Pāñcarātra literature. Thus, the ViśS (3.17-18b) initially states that the initiate (*śiṣya*) should be born of a good family (*praśastakula*) belonging to the highest three social classes (*varṇa*), and should have studied the Vedas together with their auxiliary parts (*sāṅga*) etc. However, in a subsequent verse (ViśS 3.27) it is said that the *guru*, out of compassion (*kṛpayā*), should also accept as initiates women, Śūdras and (mixed class) Anulomas who are “endowed with noble qualities” (*kalyāṇaguṇasaṃyutāḥ*). In a later chapter, the ViśS rules that none of these persons should hear mantras containing the *praṇava*, or *namaḥ*, *svāhā*, *hum*, and *phaṭ* etc., or Viṣṇu’s name with the dative ending.<sup>223</sup> This contradicts the SS (19.54c-55b), of course, which rules that Śūdras may recite *namaḥ*, and the PauṣS (27.131c-132) which allows that women and Śūdras may recite *om*. The PādS (*cp* 2.61c-64) contains a very similar proscription against women, Śūdras and Anulomas,<sup>224</sup> as does the later ŚrīprśS (16.138c-141), which also prohibits Śūdras from receiving instruction in the method of the “five times” (*gurūttamaḥ // pañcakālavidhiṃ cāpi vinā śūdrām upādiśet*, ŚrīprśS 16.137d-138b). In other instances, Śūdras are barred from performing fire-offerings (*homa*) (e.g. ParS 27.31, ViṣṇuS 2.9c-10b).

Insofar as it is possible to detect unidirectional trends in the large, and often internally inconsistent corpus of South Indian Pāñcarātra literature, then, we might provisionally conclude that there is a greater tendency among the later works towards Brahminical “orthodoxy” with regard to the question of social class (*varṇa*). Where the SanS, an apparently relatively early South Indian text, allows Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and ‘Kalpavaiśyas’ to perform limited duties as *ācārya*, for instance, the later NārS (11.21-35b) allows the Kṣatriya to act as *guru*, but states that only Brahmins may inhabit the higher role of *ācārya*. Śūdras, in this scheme, are unequivocally restricted

<sup>223</sup> ViśS 9.72-73: *śūdrāṇāṃ ca tathā strīṇāṃ anulomabhuvām api / namaḥsvāhāhumphaḍādirahitaṃ praṇavena ca // varjitaṃ viṣṇunāmaiva caturthyantaṃ ca pāṭhayet / gāyatrīṃ japahomaṃ ca ādadyād brāhmaṇo manum //*

<sup>224</sup> See also PādS *kp* 9.19, where it is said that women, Śūdras and Anulomas should worship silently (*tūṣṇīm ādhānam ācāret*), which means without mantras (*amantraka*).



to the lowest level of initiate (*samayin*).<sup>225</sup> Works which are still later, such as the Mārks (12.1), the ŚrīprśS (4.16-18) and the ŚrīpurS (2.4-8), meanwhile, dictate that only a Brahmin can be *guru* or *ācārya*. We also find among many later Saṃhitās an increased antipathy towards Śūdras and women, even when these persons are admitted still for initiation. In several, for example, a rite of purification, or literally “pacification” (*śāntihoma*), is prescribed in the event that the temple icon (*bimba*) has been touched by either (e.g. NārS 25.248c-249c, ViṣṇuS 28.22ff, ĪS 19.134-145b). Meanwhile the ŚrīprśS, in its chapter on the reparation rites, lists women and those who have not been initiated into the twice-born classes (*anupanīta*) alongside lepers (*kuṣṭhin*), people with tuberculosis (*yakṣman*), the mute (*mūkaka*), those who are blind in one eye (*kāṇa*), those with missing limbs (*aṅgahīna*), Pratilomas, and the bastard offspring of adulterous women (*kuṇḍa*) and widows (*golaka*) (ŚrīprśS 49.168-169).<sup>226</sup> However, it should be stated that not all of the later texts at my disposal contain such passages. For instance, the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Mārks, which concentrates mostly on the required reparation rites for damaged temple icons, claims (at Mārks 26.29c-30) that these are defiled by contact with foreigners (*mleccha*), people with missing limbs (*aṅgahīna*) and dogs (*śvāna*), but it does not mention women or Śūdras (though admittedly there is a small portion of text missing at Mārks 26.30c). Likewise, the ŚrīpurS (30.38ff) prescribes a reparation rite in the event that the temple icon is touched by a Cāṇḍāla, a Śabara, or various animals, but it does not mention women and Śūdras.<sup>227</sup>

Moreover, despite the apparent trend towards an increasingly conservative attitude towards women and Śūdras, I have only been able to find one instance where Śūdras are disqualified from initiation altogether. This occurs in the ViṣṇuS (29.2). Even the PādS, which explicitly characterises the Āgamasiddhānta (PādS cp 21.37-

<sup>225</sup> The NārS (11.21-35b) names a hierarchy of seven initiates: *samayin*, *dīkṣita*, *cakravartin*, *abhiṣikta*, *guru*, *ācārya*, and *bhagavant*. These are respectively identified with seven sacrificial ceremonies: *yāga*, *stoma*, *mahāyāga*, *adhvara*, *sava*, *kratu*, and *haristoma*. The NārS rules that the Brahmin is qualified to perform all seven sacrifices, the Kṣatriya the first five, the Vaiśya the first three, and the Śūdra only the first (i.e. *yāga*). Cf. SanS *Indrarātra* 4.53-55 and ViṣṇuS 29.2-4, both of which name the same sevenfold hierarchy of initiate and the corresponding sacrifices, but which do not add the detail concerning *varṇa* affiliation.

<sup>226</sup> See Manu 3.174 for these definitions of *kuṇḍa* and *golaka*.

<sup>227</sup> According to Monier-Williams (2002: 1052), ‘Śabara’ is the name of “a wild mountaineer tribe in the Deccan” which was “in later language applied to any savage or barbarian”.

40), the Tantrasiddhānta (PādS *cp* 21.55-56, 66ab), and the Tantrāntarasiddhānta (PādS *cp* 21.70c-73b) as each accepting members of all four *varṇas*, contains passages which show that the Mantrasiddhānta, its own tradition, did as well (e.g. PādS *kp* 1.15c-17b, *cp* 2.61c-64). To what, then, can we attribute this continued, albeit often reluctant, acceptance of Śūdras in particular?

Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 62) answers this question with reference to the ParS, but her answer can be applied to the broader context: “The possibility of acceptable Śūdras’ limited participation in the religious life seems to be one of the characteristic features of the ParS’s tradition. It could not accept the full participation of Śūdras, but faced by the political and economical influence of Śūdra devotees, it was obliged to accept them to some extent.” She elaborates on “the circumstances in which Pāñcarātra found itself in the south of India, where orthodox Brahmanism was exceptionally influential but where at the same time groups classified as Śūdras were not only numerically predominant but also in some cases, such as that of the Veṅṇāla agriculturalists, a power element in a society active in the patronage of religion” (ibid.: 73). This latter phenomenon has been discussed by Burton Stein (1980: 241-253), who identifies processes of urbanisation in twelfth and thirteenth century South India as catalysts of a general increase in social mobility. According to Stein (2004: 86, 97), inscriptional evidence from this period attests to the fact that many Śūdras came to enjoy considerable “social power”, and that some Śūdra families, especially from the thirteenth century, “seem to have gained Kshatriya identification through their successful assumption of roles as warrior leaders”.

We might conclude, then, that there were political drawbacks to a thoroughgoing “Vedification” of Pāñcarātra traditions in South India. Although it is certainly not wise to take scriptural ordinances on their own as evidence of ethnographic realities, the extended passage in the SanS (*Indrarātra* 9.13-50b) which contains the verses on the ‘Kalpavaiśya’ which I have quoted above does appear to indicate an environment in which a high degree of social mobility was possible. The political advantages in continuing to accept Śūdras into the fold must have been substantial given that in other respects Pāñcarātrikas were increasingly keen to stress

the continuity of their own practices with those legitimated by Brahminical orthodoxy. In the sort of social environment described by Czerniak-Drożdżowicz and Stein, it is easy to imagine that there would have been significant advantages also in accepting, to repeat Sanderson's (2005: 231-232) words, "that the brahmanical tradition alone was valid in the domain it claimed for itself". Indeed, the SanS can be interpreted as articulating a similar idea, albeit with a final qualification:

*vaidikaṃ tāntrikaṃ caiva tathā vaidikatāntrikaṃ // trividhaṃ karma saṃproktaṃ pratiṣṭhārādhanādiṣu / vaidikaṃ brāhmaṇānāṃ tu rājñāṃ vaidikatāntrikaṃ // tāntrikaṃ vaiśyaśūdrāṇāṃ sarveṣāṃ tāntrikaṃ tu vā /.* – "Ritual action concerning installation and worship etc. is declared to be threefold: Vedic, Tantric, and Vedic *and* Tantric. Vedic is for Brahmins, Vedic *and* Tantric is for kings, [and] Tantric is for Vaiśyas and Śūdras. But [in fact] Tantric is for everyone." (SanS *Bramarātra* 6.29c-31b)<sup>228</sup>

The ViṣS, which contains the same verses (at 39.315-316), elsewhere states that "worship for oneself" should be either Vedic or Tantric, while "worship for others" should be either Tantric or "mixed" but *never* Vedic.<sup>229</sup> By such means, the Pāñcarātrikas who practised "mixed worship" gave themselves, at least theoretically, a distinct advantage over their Smārta rivals, and they did so while managing to maintain a veneer of orthodoxy. For, as is clearly attested in Yāmuna's ĀP (e.g. 14.10ff), the professional priestly performance of worship "for others" (*parārtha*) was deeply frowned upon in orthodox Brahminical society, and indeed in that sphere entailed the loss of one's Brahminical status. As is evident from these regulations in the SanS and the ViṣS, Pāñcarātrikas were happy to accept that such restrictions were valid within the domain that imposed them, and of course these constraints, as well those which excluded Śūdras from the category of initiate, worked to their own advantage. For in an environment characterised by increasing social mobility and the rise to power of landowning communities considered by many not to belong to the twice-born classes, the authority and power of the domain that the orthodox

<sup>228</sup> See alternative expressions of the same idea at SanS *Bramarātra* 4.68c-73, and *Ṛṣirātra* 5.37-40, and 9.7-10, 22-24.

<sup>229</sup> ViṣS 20.344-345: *ātmārthaṃ vaidikenaiva tāntrikeṇaiva vā mune / parārthe tāntrikeṇaiva miśritaṃ vā hariṃ param // arcayet pūrvavad dhīmān rājño rāṣṭrasya vardhanam / parārthe vaidikenaiva na kuryāt tu kathamcana //*.

Brahminical tradition claimed for itself would have been substantially diminished.<sup>230</sup> In such a context, professional Pāñcarātrika ritualists were no doubt keenly aware of the advantages in limiting the degree to which their own tradition underwent Vedification.

### *iii.) Conclusions*

In this chapter I have attempted to give an overview of the ways in which authors of the Pāñcarātra scriptures associated their own tradition with that of the Veda. Needless to say, this is not intended to be an exhaustive account. As we have seen, the claim that the Pāñcarātra scriptures are “rooted in the Veda” (*vedamūlatva*) appears to have a long history, since it is mentioned already in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s ninth-tenth century ĀḌ. However, it is not included in the early Saṃhitās, and of the works available to me, its earliest articulation *on behalf of* the Pāñcarātra is in Yāmuna’s ĀP.

Numerous scriptural works postdating Yāmuna also contain this claim, and it can be found as well among the commentarial works of several of Yāmuna’s influential Vedāntin successors, including Rāmānuja (twelfth century) and Madhva (1238-1317). The latter’s formulation of the *vedamūlatva* principle appears to be indebted to Yāmuna, though the scope of its application is substantially broader (see Stoker 2004). In the later scriptural literature there is an increasing tendency to present the Pāñcarātra as conforming to orthodox norms, both in terms of its religious practice and in its attitudes towards social class. Hence, many later works restrict the participation of Śūdras, limiting their eligibility to the lower categories of initiate, and prohibiting them from reciting mantras. Some of these texts enjoin the performance of reparation rites in the event that the temple icon has been touched by a Śūdra. However, despite these restrictions, Pāñcarātra traditions of “mixed

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<sup>230</sup> See Stein (1980: 233ff) on the increase in non-Brahmin participation in Tamil temples from the twelfth century.

worship” continued to initiate Śūdras, and in so doing very likely gave themselves an advantage over the more orthodox, and less flexible, Vaidika or Smārta ritualists. For, as we have seen, in South India during the period in which these texts were composed, powerful Śūdra communities were increasingly active in the patronage of religion.

That the authors of the South Indian Saṃhitās were more intent upon aligning themselves with Vedic tradition than were their North Indian predecessors can be partly explained, no doubt, by the influence of the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, and especially of Yāmuna and, from the twelfth century, Rāmānuja. Both of these influential thinkers lent their support to the Pāñcarātra – the former, as we have seen, in the ĀP, and the latter by the temple reforms he instituted at Śrīraṅgam and, if the hagiographies are to be believed, elsewhere in the south. While Yāmuna defended the Pāñcarātra against its orthodox opponents, and Rāmānuja favoured them over the more orthodox Vaikhānasa tradition, both were nonetheless themselves thoroughly grounded in orthodox Brahminical culture. We know that Rāmānuja, especially, was a traditionalist with regard to matters relating to social class (*varṇa*), holding, for example, that Śūdras should not be granted access to the knowledge contained in the Upaniṣads (Clooney 2002). Indeed, Rāmānuja’s own social identity, as a Smārta Brahmin from the Vaḍama sub-caste (Carman 1974: 28), shows us that worshippers from orthodox backgrounds were affiliating themselves with the Pāñcarātra during this period. There is, as far as I am aware, no way of knowing if the claims to membership within a Vedic lineage, such as we find in several Mantrasiddhānta texts including the PādS (cp 21.2ff), the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* (109) and an interpolated section of the LT (41.67-78, see Rastelli 2006: 233), are genuine or not. Clearly not all Mantrasiddhāntins could claim this ancestry, and the right, therefore, to be called ‘Bhāgavata’ (see PādS cp 21.14-15). We can suppose, nonetheless, that among those who did, some came, like Rāmānuja, from Brahminical families which were not, historically, associated with the Pāñcarātra. The processes of Vedification undergone by South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions of mixed worship may have been in large part instigated by these kinds of converts.

## 5. The Ekāyanaveda

### *i.) Descriptions of the Ekāyanaveda in the South Indian literature*

I will begin this section with a brief summary of the descriptions of the Ekāyanaveda and its followers that are found in several South Indian works. Since some of these descriptions have been addressed above, and Rastelli (2006) has provided a thorough analysis of the material relating to the Ekāyanaveda in its most important testament, the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (PārS), I will limit myself here to some brief observations which I hope can provide a useful overview of the Pāñcarātrika tradition of the Ekāyanaveda in twelfth-fourteenth century South India. Subsequently, I will address the term *ekāyana* itself, and explore what the textual evidence can tell us about this Pāñcarātra tradition in earlier centuries.

Although the existence of an “unauthored” (*apauruṣeya*) Ekāyana scripture (*ekāyanaśruti*) belonging to a distinct Vedic recension (*śākhā*) is found already in Yāmuna’s (eleventh-twelfth century) *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (ĀP), the earliest explicit references to an ‘Ekāyanaveda’ occur only in the later South Indian scriptural works, namely the PārS and the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS). In these texts the Ekāyanaveda is described as the teaching (*śāstra*) to which one particular group of Pāñcarātrikas adhere. These Pāñcarātrikas are known as Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas. The PārS, which is undoubtedly a product of this tradition (Rastelli 2006), refers to the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda as the “good” or “true” tradition (*sadāgama*), and to the Ekāyanaveda itself as the Ekāntidharma (1.60a) and the “root-Veda” or the “original Veda” (*mūlaveda*). This latter name reflects the view that the actual Vedas are subordinate teachings. In contrast to the exoteric Vedas which enjoin the worship of multiple deities for various mundane and heavenly rewards, the PārS teaches that the Ekāyanaveda belongs to a “secret tradition” (*rahasyāmnāya*), whose members worship only Vāsudeva, especially in his fourfold form (*cāturātmya*), and exclusively seek liberation from *saṃsāra*. This juxtaposition, wherein the Vedas are

presented as a means to achieving lesser rewards (*bhoga*), and the Ekāyana tradition is characterised as offering the sole means to the highest goal, can be found already in Yāmuna’s ĀP (170.3-7).

Also consistent with Yāmuna’s account is the PārS’s claim, later incorporated into the predominantly Ekāyana *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS), that the Ekāyanaveda does not have a “personal” (i.e. human or divine etc.) origin (*apauruṣeya*).<sup>231</sup> That the Pāñcarātra tradition which claimed allegiance to the Ekāyanaveda considered their foundational teaching to be “uncreated” or “authorless” is also affirmed in the only other extant Pāñcarātra scripture which contains the claim that the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), *Sātvatasamhitā* (SS), and *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS) derive from the Ekāyanaveda, namely the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* (ŚrīprśS). In the second chapter of this work, the “Pāñcarātra śāstra” is equated with “the Veda named Ekāyana” (2.38-41b) which is said to be “eternal, like the Veda” (*vedavan nityam*) (2.41c). This position very likely provides an example of Vedāntin theologians, such as Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, having directly influenced scriptural forms of self-presentation.

According to the PārS (1.67c-71), the Ekāyanaveda prescribes sacrifices such as the *aśvamedha*, and it contains all Vedic mantras, as well as teaching the 12 syllabled mantra (10.139). It is also said to be characterised by “abstention” or “disengagement” (*nivṛtti*). As Rastelli (2006: 161-168) shows, the author of the PārS borrows this term, alongside many other terms and motifs (the most telling of which is the designation *ekāntidharma* for the original teaching itself), from the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh), in a deliberate attempt to identify the Ekāyanaveda with the teaching given to Nārada in that text.

The PādS provides us with several descriptions of the Ekāyana tradition which are valuable because they can afford us some insight into how the Ekāyanas were

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<sup>231</sup> PārS 19.524-526b (→ ĪS 21.561b-563): *ādyam nityoditavyūhasthāpanādīprakāśakam / apauruṣeyam sadbrahmavāsudevākhyāyājīnām // lakṣyabhūtaṃ dvijendrāṇām hṛdistham adhikāriṇām / brahmopaniṣadākhyam ca divyamantrakriyānvitam // vivekadam paraṃ śāstram anicchāto ’pavargadam /*. Rastelli (2006: 189) has shown that this passage in the PārS draws heavily on SS 2.4-7b, though the “supreme teaching” in the latter work is not said to be *apauruṣeya*, and nor, as Rastelli points out, is it described as being a *veda* of any sort. It is worth noting that in his commentary on SS 2.4-7b, Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa equates this “supreme śāstra” (*paraṃ śāstram*) with the *ekāyanaśruti*, and claims that the SS is the “essence” of that (*ekāyanaśruteḥ sārabhūtaṃ sātvatatāntram upadekṣyāmīty...*).

regarded by certain other Pāñcarātrikas. Of course, we must treat the PādS's descriptions of the Ekāyanas with a degree of caution, knowing as we do that they are the product of a tradition which apparently competed with the Ekāyanas for the control of public temples. With this in mind, we must pay particular attention to those descriptions of the Ekāyanas in the PādS which are consistent with those found in the PārS and the ĪS, and in portions of other texts, such as the PauṣS, which appear to have been authored by Ekāyanas, and consider these to be in general the more reliable. So, for instance, we have little reason to doubt the accuracy of the PādS's (cp 21.30-32, 47ab) claim that the Ekāyanas worship the fourfold form of god (*caturmūrti*), since this is also attested to by the Ekāyanas. Also, the claim (cp 21.36cd) that Ekāyanas perform life-cycle rituals (*saṃskāra*) beginning with the impregnation rite (*niṣeka*) according to their own system rather than by one or other of the recognised Vedic *śākhās*, seems to be fairly uncontroversial given that Yāmuna (ĀP 169.3ff) states the same, and that no Ekāyana text indicates otherwise.

We have to treat rather more cautiously the PādS's (cp 21.53) claim that Ekāyanas do not need to undergo an initiation ceremony (*dīkṣā*), since this is not explicitly stated in the PārS or, as far as I am aware, in any other work. However, as Rastelli (2006: 193-195) points out, this ceremony is not described in the PārS, and in one passage from that text (PārS 13.114c-115) the devotee is promised a rebirth as an Ekāyana if he successfully performs his duties. The PauṣS also guarantees a superior rebirth as an Ekāyana, or a 'Tanmaya' (36.263c-266b), as reward for devotion to Nārāyaṇa via the performance of mantra-repetition (*japa*) and fire-offerings (*homa*). In addition, there is a further clue, albeit from outside the South Indian context, that the Ekāyana is a tradition or "lineage" that one is born into, for the Kashmirian Brahmin Vāmanadatta, author of the so-called *Samvitprakāśa* (SP), claims in the closing verses of each *prakaraṇa* of that work that he was born into the Ekāyana.<sup>232</sup> So, we may choose to tentatively accept this claim, even if the PādS (cp

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<sup>232</sup> SP 1.137c-138b reads: *ekāyane prasūtasya kaśmīreṣu dvijātmanaḥ // kṛtir vāmanadattasya seyaṃ bhagavadāśrayā* / . - "Depending on the Lord, this is a work of Vāmanadatta, a Brahmin born in Kashmir into the Ekāyana [lineage]." Cf. SP 2.61, 3.60, 4.98, and 5.52. On the title of this work see Sanderson (2009a).



21.54ab) remarks elsewhere that adherents of the triple Veda can enter into the Ekāyana provided that they do not already belong to another Pāñcarātra Siddhānta.

With regard to other characterisations of the Ekāyanas which we find in the PādS, we enter more complex territory. For instance the claim (at *cp* 21.43-46) that Ekāyanas are not qualified to perform the rites related to the construction of temples and the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of divine images therein, is contradicted both by the PārS (15.14c-20 etc.) and by other works, as we will see below, but this does not necessarily mean that we can therefore dismiss the claim as false. For at the least, the presence of this claim in the PādS indicates that it was accepted by some Pāñcarātrikas. The same can be said for the PādS assertion that Ekāyanas (as “non-Bhāgavatas”, *abhāgavata*) are not permitted to perform worship for others (*parārthayajana*, PādS *cp* 21.17c-20b), which is contradicted at e.g. PārS 9.152 (see Rastelli 2006: 79), and that they cannot use Vedic mantras (PādS *cp* 1.37c-39b), which is also contradicted in several other works, as we will see below.

Lastly, we turn to the social organisation of the Ekāyana tradition in South India. The PādS (*cp* 21.39c-40) claims that the Ekāyanas admit members of all four *varṇas*. As far as I am aware this is not contradicted anywhere, and it is confirmed by the ĪS which states that the preceptor (*ācārya*) may be either Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya or Śūdra.<sup>233</sup> As we will see below, the JS, SS and PauṣS also appear to confirm that Ekāyanas can belong to any of the four *varṇas*.

## *ii.) The term ekāyana and its earlier uses*

Several modern scholars (e.g. Renou 1960: 8, Dyczkowski 1994: 293) have linked the Pāñcarātra tradition of the Ekāyanaveda to the *ekāyana* which is listed as a branch of knowledge in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (7.1.2-4). As has been demonstrated by its various interpretations, the meaning of the term *ekāyana* in this Upaniṣadic

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<sup>233</sup> ĪS 16.5-7b: *brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyo vaiśyaḥ śūdro vā bhagavanmayaḥ / śraddhābhaktisamāyuktaḥ sampannaḥ śāntamānasaḥ // āstikaḥ satyasandhaś ca sadācārasamanvitaḥ / ācāryaṃ varayet pūrvaṃ bhagavacchāstrakovidam // tattvajñam bhagavadbhaktaṃ bhagavadvaṃśasambhavam /*

verse is not clear, though Śāṅkara's understanding of it as "governance" or "statecraft" (*nītiśāstra*) is generally rejected by modern interpreters. Among recent translations, for instance, Roebuck (2003: 181, 424) follows Max Müller in taking *ekāyana* to denote "ethics" i.e. "the one way [to live]", while Olivelle (1996: 156, 351) follows Faddegon (1926: 52) in understanding it to mean literally "the going by oneself", and therefore as referring to "uninterrupted speech" or "the monologues" (contrasted with *vākovākya*, "dialogues"). Slaje (2009: 134, 188, 318), meanwhile, uniformly translates *ekāyana* simply with "*Sammelpunkt*". The Pāñcarātriśa explanation of the term *ekāyana* which is contained in both the PārS and the ĪS does not coincide with any of these readings. The explanation runs as follows: "There is no way other than this for going to liberation; therefore the wise say that [this] is called Ekāyana (i.e. 'the only way')." <sup>234</sup> This analysis of the term may rely in part upon Yāmuna's characterisation of the *pañcakāla* rites enjoined by the Ekāyanaveda as the "single means" (*ekopāya*) to attain the Bhagavat. In addition, it appears that the wording in the PārS and the ĪS might have been borrowed from a version of the *Puruṣasūkta* which is contained in the Taittirīya recension of the Black Yajurveda, and which is quoted by Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.2.35 (329.1-2). <sup>235</sup> If this is true, it may point to the South Indian origin of the Pāñcarātriśa idea that *ekāyana* means "the only way". <sup>236</sup>

There is no indication, at any rate, that the term *ekāyana* has this meaning in the earlier Pāñcarātriśa literature, or that other authors who wrote of Pāñcarātriśa Ekāyanas understood the term to imply this claim. A brief survey of the use of the word in other literary contexts is helpful here, because it reveals a quite different meaning, and one which is perhaps closer to the original sense of *ekāyana* as used by Pāñcarātriśas. Firstly, the term is used in both the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (7.4.2, 7.5.2) and in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* to denote "meeting place", "uniting point" or

<sup>234</sup> PārS 1.57c-58b → ĪS 1.19: *mokṣāyanāya vai panthā etadanyo na vidyate / tasmād ekāyanam nāma pravādanti manīṣināḥ* //.

<sup>235</sup> Taittirīyāraṇyaka 3.12.7 (excerpt): *nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate /*. See also Taittirīyāraṇyaka 3.13.1, and Śvetāśvataropaniṣad 3.8d, 6.15d.

<sup>236</sup> By the time of the composition of the earliest extant Pāñcarātriśa Saṃhitās (i.e. circa ninth century), the Taittirīya schools were found almost exclusively in the Dravidian South. See Renou (1947: 200-203) and Houben (1991: 36 n. 69).

“point of convergence”. Olivelle (1996: 29, 70-71) translates *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 2.4.11 and 4.5.12 as follows:

It is like this. As the ocean is the point of convergence (*ekāyana*) of all the waters, so the skin is the point of convergence of all the sensations of touch [...] and speech (*vāc*) [is the point of convergence] of all the Vedas.

In other words, rather than denoting a “single” or “exclusive” path or way, in this instance *ekāyana* refers to a single point at which *various* paths converge. The sense of *ekāyana* as a single “end point” or “goal”, conveyed here especially in the example of the waters and the ocean, is brought out more fully in another branch of ancient Indian literature, namely the Pāli Nikāyas. In this context, Gethin (1992: 59-64) addresses the problem of the meaning of the term *ekāyana* in the expression *ekāyana maggo* which is applied to the “establishing of mindfulness” (*satipaṭṭhāna*). Noting that the common modern translation of *ekāyana* here as “the one (i.e. only) way” does not coincide with the interpretations provided in the Pāli commentaries, Gethin identifies two of the commentarial explanations as having particular importance. These are: 1.) “A path that is *ekāyana* is one that has to be travelled alone; one who is ‘alone’ is one who has left behind the crowd and withdrawn with a mind secluded from the objects of the senses”; and 2.) “A path that is *ekāyana* is one that goes to one place only, namely *nibbāna*”. The notion of “going to one” conveyed in the second explanation is also present, according to Gethin, in the only other occurrence of the expression *ekāyana maggo* in the four primary Nikāyas. This occurs in the *Mahāsīhanādasutta*, wherein *ekāyanena maggena* carries the sense of “a particular path that leads to a particular place - and that place only.”

Gethin goes on to note that the use of *ekāyana* in the first sense can also carry the broader meaning of “a place where only one goes”, thus conveying the idea of a “lonely” or “narrow” path.<sup>237</sup> He reports that both senses of *ekāyana* distinguished here i.e. *ekāyana* as a solitary or “narrow” path or “a lonely place”, and *ekāyana* as a

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<sup>237</sup> Primarily addressing Epic and Upaniṣadic literature, Gethin (1992: 61-62) writes: “As a noun, *ekāyana* is first of all a lonely place – a place where only one person goes.” As an adjective, meanwhile, *ekāyana* can also mean “narrow”, so that *ekāyana mārgaḥ* might refer to a path that is “only wide enough for one”.

“going to one (place)”, can also be found in the MBh, respectively at 3.157.33 and 14.19.1.<sup>238</sup> For the present purposes, I would like to draw attention to two passages in the epic which Gethin does not mention, but which appear be more relevant to a discussion of the Pāñcarātrika use of the word. The first occurs in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section. While Colas (2003: 234) is correct to note that the term *ekāyana* does not appear in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, both elements of the compound do occur in the same suggestive half-*śloka* which attempts to explain the name Nārāyaṇa via a process of semantic analysis. The line reads as follows:

*narāṇām ayanam khyātam aham ekaḥ sanātanaḥ* । – “It is known that I am the single eternal goal of men.” (MBh 12.328.35ab)

This explanation of Nārāyaṇa’s name is given by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna after the latter has asked for the etymologies (*nirukta*) of the various names by which Kṛṣṇa is known in the Vedas and Purāṇas (MBh 12.328.5-7). The second passage to which I would like to draw attention also occurs in a section of the MBh which has been identified by scholars as comprising a “textual unit” that has been inserted into the epic by redactors who are intent upon presenting a devotional theology in which Kṛṣṇa is identified with e.g. Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva as the supreme god (Malinar 2007: 35, Deshpande 1991). This section (MBh 5.65-69) also contains a list of the etymologies (*nirvacana*) of Kṛṣṇa’s names (5.68.3-14), including a variant on the verse quoted above, but the passage of relevance to the term *ekāyana* occurs in the preceding chapter. The passage (MBh 5.67.15-21), which I think is worth quoting in full, has been translated by van Buitenen (1978: 337-338) as follows:

*Vyāsa said:* There is this path of one direction (*eṣa ekāyanaḥ panthā*) by which the wise go forth; when one sees it one overcomes death; a great man does not attach himself.

*Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:* Come, Saṃjaya, tell me the path where all danger ceases, by which I may reach Hṛṣīkeśa and attain ultimate peace.

*Saṃjaya said:* One of unmade soul can never know Janārdana, whose soul is made. But the performance of one’s rites is not the way unless the senses are

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<sup>238</sup> The use of *ekāyana* with the sense of “a single goal” can also be found at MBh 7.21.26ab, where the Pāṇḍavas are said to be intent upon a single goal (i.e. victory in battle). This sense of the term, then, need not be limited to soteriological contexts.

mastered. The single-minded relinquishment of one's love for the objects of the excitable senses (*indriyāṇām udīrṇānām kāmātyāgo 'pramādataḥ*), undistracted attention (*apramāda*), and avoidance of injury (*avihiṃsā*) are the womb of knowledge, there is no doubt. Be consistently and unwearingly in control of your senses, king, let your spirit not stray, but check it hither and yon. This mastering of the senses (*indriyadhāraṇa*) the brahmins know as constant wisdom. This is the wisdom and the path by which the wise go forth. Men cannot reach Keśava with unbridled senses, king. The self-controlled man who is learned in the scriptures finds, by virtue of yoga, serenity in the truth.

If we return to the two explanations of the term *ekāyana* that Gethin identifies as the most important in the Pāli commentaries, we find that both senses – an *ekāyana* path is one that is travelled alone by one who has withdrawn his mind from the objects of the senses, and is one that leads only to liberation – are very much present in the above passage. Gethin's concluding view that *both* of these senses of *ekāyana* should be relevant to our understanding of the use of the term “in the *satipaṭṭhāna* context” is, I believe, instructive for our inquiry into the meaning of the term within the context of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. For there, as we have seen, the Ekāyanas advocate the performance of one's ritual duties alongside the renunciation of any personal desires, and they also consistently emphasise the fact that they seek liberation as the “only fruit”.

Certainly this latter characteristic is presented as the defining trait of the Ekāyanas in what may be the earliest extant reference to this tradition, at least under this name. This occurs in the Kashmirian courtly epic *Haraviṇyaya*, written by Ratnākara in around 830 CE (Sanderson 2007 & 2009a). Sanderson has drawn attention to a verse in the 47<sup>th</sup> canto, addressed to the goddess Caṇḍī, wherein the author lists “the goal-states of all soteriologies as aspects or manifestations of the one Śaiva goddess” (ibid.: 107-108). The verse reads: “You, O goddess, are the unmanifest [material cause, i.e. *prakṛti*], said by Ekāyanas to be the universal cause in which the single fruit that is liberation [is attained]” (*sādhāraṇā tvam apavargaphalaikahetur ekāyanair abhitā bhagavaty aliṅgā, Haraviṇyaya 47.56cd*).

iii.) *The Ekāyanas in the JS, SS and PauṣS*

Whether a text called ‘Ekāyanaveda’ ever existed has been debated by modern scholars, with Renou (1947: 205), for instance, claiming that the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda is a late invention, and Rastelli (e.g. 2008: 265) arguing that, nonetheless, a text or texts known as ‘Ekāyanaveda’ must have once been extant. In support of this, Rastelli points to the PārS’s (17.451c) prescription to recite the *ekāyanī śākhā*, and the JS’s (20.269cd-270a) prescription to recite mantras from the *ekāyanīyaśākhā*. To these we can perhaps add the PādS’s (*cp* 13.66c-70b) decree that the “original recension based on the Ekāyana” should be studied alongside the various recensions of the Ṛc, Yajus and Sāman. However, although there are a number of Pāñcarātra works which refer to the Ekāyana as a Vedic *śākhā*, it should be noted that none of these aforementioned verses refer precisely to an ‘Ekāyanaveda’, and that if a text or texts bearing this name did once exist, it does not seem possible at present to identify it (or them) in any extant source. Certainly there is insufficient evidence to corroborate Krishnamacharya’s (1959: 5) suggestion that both the ‘Pañcarātraśruti’ and the ‘Pañcarātropāṇiṣad’ that are quoted by the Kashmirian author Bhagavadutpala in his *Spandapradīpikā* refer to the ‘Ekāyanaveda’. The claim made by Alaśīṅgabhāṭṭa in his commentary on the ĪS, the *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā* (SāPr), namely that the JS, SS and PauṣS constitute the “sūtras” of the “original Veda” (*mūlaveda*) (i.e. the Ekāyanaveda),<sup>239</sup> is probably best interpreted as a late attempt to solve the puzzle we are presently addressing, but it indicates, at least, that this author did not think it likely that the Ekāyanaveda was ever a unique work. Much the same idea is contained, as we have seen in Chapter One, in the ŚrīprśS (49.471c-473).

What, then, is the origin of the idea of the Ekāyanaveda, and of the Ekāyana tradition as a Vedic *śākhā*? Inevitably, these questions are not easy to answer, but we might gain a better understanding by turning to the earliest of the published Saṃhitās, namely the JS, SS and PauṣS. Although none of these works refer to an Ekāyanaveda, each of them contain references to Ekāyana mantras or to “twice-

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<sup>239</sup> SāPr on ĪS 1.64-67: *idaṃ sātvatapauṣkarajayākhyatantratrayaṃ mūlavedasya sūtrarūpam*.

born” (*dvija*) Ekāyanas or Ekāyana Brahmins (*vipra*), and the JS refers to an Ekāyana *śākhā*. By analysing these passages, then, we may hope to learn something of the Ekāyana tradition in the centuries preceding the composition of works such as the PādS and the PārS.

Of the earlier works, the JS will involve the shortest discussion, since a form of the term *ekāyana* occurs only twice in this text, and both instances belong to the same short passage (JS 20.265-270). The passage itself occurs within the context of the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of an image of Viṣṇu in a temple. Members of ten Vaiṣṇava denominations (named above in Chapter Two) are seated by the preceptor (*ācārya*) in the ordinal and cardinal directions and are instructed to recite “the supremely sacred mantras derived from the *ekāyanīyaśākhā*.” It is notable that none of the denominations is named *ekāyana*, though one of them is called *ekāntin*, a name which the PārS and the ĪS, as well as the PauṣS as we will see below, occasionally use synonymously with *ekāyana*. All ten denominations are called ‘Pāñcarātrika’, and the JS tells us that their members may belong to any of the four *varṇas*.<sup>240</sup> As I have noted above, it is significant that the Vaikhānasas are included here among the Vaiṣṇava groups, for it indicates that this passage does not belong to the earliest portions of the JS, which appear to have been composed in either North India (Sanderson 2009: 61) or the upper Deccan (Rajan 1981: 34). As far as we know, the Vaikhānasas were restricted to South India throughout the premodern period, which suggests that the composition of this passage also occurred in the south.

I shall now turn to the SS. The majority of SS 24.282-25.294, wherein all this work’s references to the Ekāyanas are found, have been incorporated into the PārS

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<sup>240</sup> JS 20.265-270 (→ PārS 12.311c-317b): *bhagavadbhāvino ye ca yatayaḥ pāñcarātrikāḥ / caturbhir āptair viprādyair yuktāṃs tv īśadiśi nyaset // ekāntinas tathā ’nāptaiḥ* (corr. *’ptaiś ca*) *yuktān āgneyadiggatān / niveśya vipra naiṛtyāṃ bhaktān vaikhānasān* (corr. *vaikhānasaiḥ*) *saha // caturbhir añjalikais tato vāyavyagocare / sārambhiṇas sātvaṭāṃś ca tatkāle bhagavanmayān // catvāro ’tha caturdikṣu yojyāś ca śikhino mune / teṣāṃ caivānuyāyivāc catvāras tu pravartinaḥ // brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ śūdrāś ca munisattama / ekāyanīyaśākhottān mantrān paramapāvanān // pāṭhayec ca yatīn āptān pūrvān vai pāñcarātrikān / svānuṣṭhānaiḥ svakān mantrān japataḥ saṃśītavratān //*. Both of the above emmendations are suggested by the editor.

and the ĪS.<sup>241</sup> Here, at least four Ekāyanas (24.302ab) are named among the professional assistants to an officiating temple priest or *guru* - they are literally “guardians of the image” (*mūrtipa*, 25.113d-114a, 255) - in a sequence of rites relating to the construction of a temple (24.282-433) and the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and worship of a divine image therein (25.39-260b). These Ekāyanas are said to be Brahmins (*vipra*, e.g. 24.287c, 25.118d). They receive instructions from the guru together with other professional assistants (25.106ab) who are also identified as Brahmins, and who are said to be specialists in one or other of the four Vedas (e.g. 24.291a, 25.157ab, 170b, 206ab etc.). These latter Brahmins are evidently also Pāñcarātrikas, and they are explicitly identified as such for they are called *bhagavanmaya* (at 24.288b and 326b), which is a common way of referring to a Pāñcarātriaka adept both in the SS and in the broader scriptural literature.<sup>242</sup> Although it is not precisely stated, they are presumably the same Brahmins that are described in the second chapter of the SS (2.8cd) as “adherents” or “proclaimers” of the Veda (*vedavādin*) who engage in “mixed sacrifices” (*vyāmiśrayāga*).

In these chapters, the Ekāyanas are distinguished from the other Brahminical assistants (*mūrtipa*) primarily on account of their textual expertise. For while the latter are specialists in the Vedic mantras, the Ekāyanas are “knowers of the Pāñcarātra” (*pañcarātravid*, 25.134c). Indeed, on two occasions they are referred to as simply ‘Pāñcarātriaka’ in order to differentiate them from the Brahmins who recite from the Ṛgveda etc. (24.344-345, 25.145c-146). And at the beginning of the passage containing prescriptions for rites relating to the construction of the temple, the Ekāyanas are introduced as “Brahmins dedicated to the Sadāgama” (24.287cd). This latter term is given in the PauṣS (at e.g. 38.307c-309) as an alternative name for the ‘Pāñcarātra’. I will discuss this passage in the PauṣS below, when I address this text directly.

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<sup>241</sup> Parallel passages between SS 24-25 and the PārS are listed in Rastelli (2006: 577-578). Regarding the ĪS, most of SS 24.282-433 is found at ĪS 16.93-104, and 139c-287. Most of SS 25.1-294 is contained in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the ĪS, with the following exceptions: SS 25.64c-87b → ĪS 15.59c-61, 117-135; SS 25.260c-268c → ĪS 16.293c-301c; SS 25.271c-287b → ĪS 16.312c-328b.

<sup>242</sup> In the SS see e.g. 6.74cd (and Alaśiṅgabhāṭṭa’s commentary on this verse), 7.107c-109b, and 22.46. Elsewhere see e.g. JS 16.7-9, 18.6, and PauṣS 27.207cd, 32.88-89, 37.63cd etc.



Other names by which the Ekāyanas are known in this section of the SS include ‘Tajjña’ (25.124c) and ‘Tanmaya’ (25.132a). The latter is ordinarily found either as an adjective meaning “made of that” or “consisting of that”, or as the derivative abstract noun *tanmayatva*. It occurs in its adjectival form in several Upaniṣads, where it has generally been interpreted as denoting a doctrine of identity with *brahman* (“that”).<sup>243</sup> Both forms are commonly found in the Śaiva scriptural literature as well as that of the Pāñcarātra.<sup>244</sup> Its use as a proper noun, such as we find in SS 25, is much less common, at least in Pāñcarātra works, though it is notable that this form can be found also in an earlier chapter of the SS.<sup>245</sup> At any rate, we can take both ‘Tajjña’ and ‘Tanmaya’ as honorifics, and in this respect there is little to differentiate such forms from the qualifier *bhagavanmaya* which is applied to the priestly assistants who specialise in the Vedic mantras.

What can we learn about the Ekāyanas from their role in the installation rites as related in the SS? A couple of points are worthy of note. Firstly, they appear to have a close association with the fourfold form of god (*caturvyūha*), for they represent these forms in the fire sacrifice (*havana*) during the installation of the pots (*kumbha*). Here it is said that the guru seats in the cardinal directions four Ekāyanas who bear the names “Vāsudeva and so on” (24.302ab). Later, they recite the *vyūhamantra* (25.114) and the mantras of the four forms (*caturmūrti*, 25.242). Secondly, throughout the installation rites the Ekāyanas recite not only Pāñcarātra mantras but also Vedic mantras (e.g. at 24.333, 25.53-54b, 95c-96b, 113d-115b, 253-257b etc.).<sup>246</sup> Of course, this prescription for Ekāyanas to recite Vedic mantras contradicts the aforementioned assertion contained in the PādS (*cp* 21.37c-39b) – namely, that the Ekāyanas do not recite Vedic mantras.

There is good reason to believe that chapters 24 and 25 are later additions to the SS, and that at least the final third of chapter 24 (24.282-433) and the bulk of chapter 25 were written together for inclusion within the text. There are several clues which point to the validity of these claims, and I will briefly enumerate them here. Firstly,

<sup>243</sup> See for example Olivelle (1996: 262) and Radhakrishnan (1994: 683).

<sup>244</sup> Some of the uses of these terms in the Pāñcarātra literature are discussed in Rastelli (2009).

<sup>245</sup> See SS 7.69d, 77d, and 88a. As mentioned above, *tanmaya* can also be found as a proper noun designating the Ekāyanas at e.g. PauṣS 36.266b and PādS *cp* 11.243b).

<sup>246</sup> These mantras are listed by Hikita (1995; 2005).

both chapters address the preparation for and performance of a temple-based *parārthapūjā* wherein professional priests officiate on behalf of a royal patron, here referred to simply as *ārādhaka* (e.g. at SS 24.239d, 281c; 25.105d, 119b). The royal patron’s “universal sovereignty” (he is considered, in this respect, akin to Vāsudeva) is hailed at the beginning of the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter.<sup>247</sup> Conversely, the remainder of the SS is concerned not with the priestly performance of temple rituals for a fee-paying client (on which see e.g. SS 24.54, 25.259ab), but with the initiation ceremonies and, more extensively, the broad repertoire of “private” post-initiatory rites, in other words with worship “for oneself” (*svārthapūjā*). This fact suggests that the final two chapters were simply appended to the text, and indeed the preceding chapters, which address the rules of conduct for initiates (21-22) and the selection of mantras for the *vibhava* forms of god (23), do not prepare the reader of the SS for this abrupt shift in focus. In addition, the naming of Ekāyanas, and the practice of explicitly identifying Vedic mantras by naming their source is absent from the remainder of the text.

Although we cannot be certain, it seems probable that at least the final third of chapter 24 (and possibly this chapter as a whole) together with 25.1-294 were written specifically for inclusion within the SS, rather than having been incorporated *en bloc* from another work. This is not to say, of course, that passages within this portion of text could not have been incorporated from other texts.<sup>248</sup> Rather, this section of the text more generally seems to have been authored, or at least thoroughly revised, in order to be incorporated into the larger work. This is indicated by the fact that it remains consistent throughout with what Smith (1975: 515) calls the “narrative framework” of the SS i.e. the dialogue between Lord Viṣṇu (Bhagavat) and Saṃkarṣaṇa as related by Nārada. This is evident, for instance, in the frequent use of

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<sup>247</sup> SS 24.16c-17c: *varṇāśramagurutvāc ca svāmitvād akhilasya ca // bhūtādidevarūpatvād uttamād yeṣu vastuṣu / nṛpaś... //*. Elsewhere in the SS (e.g. at 5.98 and 7.77), the “first god” (*ādideva*) is identified as Vāsudeva.

<sup>248</sup> The prayer to summon Viṣṇu into his four-faced material form at SS 25.119c-122 may well be drawn from an older source. Sanderson (2009a: 109) reports that these verses have been transmitted among Kashmirian Smārta Brahmins in modern times. Cf. the wording in this prayer with the description of the four-faced form of Śaktyātman or Śaktīśa at SS 12.9-19.

the vocative *lāṅgalin* (“possessor of the plough”) which is an epithet of Saṃkarṣaṇa.<sup>249</sup>

The question as to when these chapters may have been added to our text remains very difficult to answer. While it is certainly possible that this redaction occurred in South India, there is not, as far as I am aware, any obvious indication of this. For instance there is no evidence, as far as I can see, that the author’s world-view has been influenced by ideas which would come to be labelled as “differentiated non-dualism” (*viśiṣṭādvaita*). Indeed, the clearest articulation of a philosophical stance which we find in chapters 24 and 25 indicates that our author’s outlook is in keeping, rather, with the dominant philosophical mode of the remainder of the SS, namely that of “difference and non-difference” (*bhedābheda*).<sup>250</sup> This suggests that if these chapters were added to our text in South India, this is likely to have happened before the career of Rāmānuja (twelfth century), who was to exert such a profound influence on the Pāñcarātra traditions of this region. Such a suggestion also appears to find support in the fact that the appended chapters contain numerous passages wherein the goal of acquiring “perfections” or supernatural powers (*siddhi*) and worldly “enjoyments” (*bhoga*) is presented as being compatible with, or even a legitimate alternative to, the pursuit of liberation from *saṃsāra* (*apavarga* or *mokṣa*).<sup>251</sup> For in the *bhakti*-oriented climate which succeeded the rise to prominence of Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇava communities, these goals were increasingly subordinated to the idea of liberation as god’s gracious reward for an attitude of devotional surrender. The SS’s closing *phalaśruti* (25.379-384), wherein rewards are promised for those who conceal the preceding Saṃhitā from non-devotees who are desirous of *bhoga*, is undoubtedly a still later addition to the text.

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<sup>249</sup> See e.g. SS 24.397d, 414d; 25.172d, 185b, 188d, 232b, 266b. Conversely, the presence of the vocative *lāṅgalin* in the numerous parallel passages contained in the ĪS, and at PārS 15.594b, help us to establish that these passages have been borrowed from elsewhere, since Saṃkarṣaṇa does not feature in the “narrative frameworks” of these texts.

<sup>250</sup> See SS 25.148c-153. For examples of Bhedābheda-vāda elsewhere in the SS see e.g. 2.72, 5.7-8, 5.81-82b, and 9.27. That said, as with the majority of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, there is not one consistent philosophical “position” undergirding the SS’s accounts of god’s relationship to the world. For imagery clearly indebted to the doctrine of “non-dualism” (*advaita*), for instance, see SS 4.33-35b.

<sup>251</sup> See e.g. SS 24.408ab, 25.2-3b, 229cd, 288, 308ab, 357b. However see also 25.367cd, wherein supernatural pleasures (*bhoga*) are graded below existence in “the abode of Acyuta”.

Lastly, it is notable that at the beginning of the final two chapters of the SS, it is claimed that members of all four *varṇas* may perform the construction of a “mantra-made form of god” (*mantramayaṃ vapuḥ*, 24.2), and the ritual wherein mantras are fixed onto the icon (*mantrabimbaniveśana*, 25.1-2). These statements obviously refer to the prospective “worshipper” (*ārādhaka*) or “patron” of the rituals which are about to be addressed.

Finally, I turn to the PauṣS. Because this text is full of corrupted passages and missing portions and is, in its present state, even less of an homogeneous entity than is the SS, I will confine myself here to making some general observations on those passages which either directly or indirectly refer to the Ekāyanas. I have listed these observations separately in order to convey my opinion that the passages addressed should not necessarily be interpreted as belonging to a single authorial voice, or even to the perspective of a single Pāñcarātra tradition.

1. The first use of the term *ekāyana* in the PauṣS is worthy of note because it occurs in a verse which closely resembles a verse in the SS. In both texts these verses occur in the context of the performance of the *śrāddha* ritual, wherein the worshipper presents offerings to his deceased ancestors. In the passage in the SS (6.168c-169b), the worshipper welcomes four Pāñcarātrika Brahmins (to receive the offerings) who are described as “having attained their goal in the supreme reality” (... *caturo viniveśyāsaneṣu ca // labdhalakṣān pare tattve brāhmaṇān pāñcarātrikān* /). In the PauṣS (27.166ab), the “worthy recipient” who has “attained his goal in the supreme reality” is a twice-born Ekāyana (*labdhalakṣaṃ pare tattve pātram ekāyanaṃ dvijaṃ* (corr. *dvija*) /).
2. Unlike the SS, the PauṣS contains several passages (e.g. 31.149-150b, 38.41-46, 272-273b) which bear witness to the type of Pāñcarātrika “sectarianism” which I have addressed in the previous chapter. In the following verses, the Ekāyanas are clearly described in opposition to the “mixed worshippers”. Part of this passage has been quoted above, I present a fuller version here:

*jñātvaivaṃ bhaktisāṅkaryam na kuryād evam eva hi // varjanīyaṃ prayatnena ya icched uttamāṃ gatim / viprā ekāyanākhyā ye te bhaktās tattvato 'cyute // ekāntinaḥ sutattvasthā dehāntān nānyayājinaḥ / kartavyatvena ye viṣṇuṃ saṃyajanti phalaṃ vinā // prāpnuvanti ca dehānte vāsudevatvam abjaja / vyāmiśrayājinaś cānye bhaktābhāsā tu te smṛtāḥ // parijñeyās tu te viprā nānāmārgagaṇārcanāt /* – “Knowing thus [i.e. that Puruṣottama is the “inner ruler” (*antaryāmin*) of all gods], one should never perform mixed devotion. Indeed one who desires the supreme goal should avoid [that] with every effort. Those Brahmins that are called Ekāyanas are truly devotees of Acyuta. They who worship Viṣṇu as a duty [that is] without (worldly) fruit, worshipping no other [god], are Ekāntins who [will] exist in their true state after death. [In other words] at death they attain the state of Vāsudeva, O Lotus-born! And the others are mixed worshippers - they are considered to be devotees in appearance only. Those Brahmins are [easily] recognised on account of their worshipping a multitude [of inferior gods] in various different ways.” (36.259c-263b)

3. At PauṣS 31.286ab it is also said that the Ekāntins (i.e. the Ekāyanas) do not desire worldly fruits – here they are called *aphalārthin*. We can suppose that it is they who are referred to when the text speaks of “devotees without desires” (*akāma*) earlier in the same chapter (31.203cd, 227cd). In these instances, and elsewhere (e.g. 36.80ab, 38.27ab), they are contrasted with devotees “with desires” (*sakāma*). At 31.202c-203a, it is stated that “[Rituals] such as the sacrifice are known to grant only meagre fruits to worshippers with desires, even if they grant heaven” (*kratuvat svalpaphaladā svargadā yady api smṛtāḥ // sakāmānāṃ hi tatrāpi...*). The worshippers without desires, meanwhile, are granted “the world of Acyuta” (*acyutaloka*, 203cd), or they are “united in the supreme self” (*paramātmāni saṃyojyam*, 227cd). The mention of sacrifice (*kratu*) in the former instance would appear to identify the *sakāma* devotees with those “mixed worshippers” whose primary expertise lies in the Vedas (27.711ab). These Vaidikas/mixed worshippers are contrasted with the “Brahmins who worship no other [god]” (*ananyayājīn*, 27.710c), or who “seek refuge in no other” (*ananyasāraṇa*, 36.78a), and with Ekāntins who “know the Āgama” (*āgamajña*, 32.72cd). From these examples we can deduce the following: the Ekāyanas identify themselves as the legitimate heirs and custodians of the Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition; they

worship Viṣṇu exclusively, and believe that non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrins worship other gods in addition to Viṣṇu; they worship god because they consider it to be their duty (*kartavya*), rather than as a means of satisfying desires, and they consider themselves unique in this respect; they believe that they attain a higher goal after death than the other devotees; they like to call themselves Ekāntins. I will discuss this last term in Chapters Seven and Eight.

4. As with South Indian Pāñcarātra works such as the PādS, the PārS and the ĪS etc., the PauṣS divides the Pāñcarātra tradition into four Siddhāntas (38.293c-303b). However, the PauṣS calls what is elsewhere known as the Āgamasiddhānta simply ‘Siddhānta’ (32.35b, 38.293c-294c). If this is accepted as the earliest extant account of the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, this may indicate that ‘Siddhānta’ was in fact the original, or at least an early name of the Āgamasiddhānta. If this is the case, we might reasonably ask: could there be a link between this tradition and the ‘Pañcarātrasiddhāntins’ spoken of by Śaṅkara several centuries earlier? Given the distance in time between Śaṅkara and the South Indian Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, it is unlikely that this question could be answered with any degree of certainty. However, it is worth restating the fact that Śaṅkara distinguishes between these Pañcarātrasiddhāntins and the ‘Bhāgavatas’, just as later scriptural works such as the PādS distinguish between Bhāgavatas and Āgamasiddhāntins. At any rate, the PauṣS (38.293c-294) states that this ‘Siddhānta’, wherein Brahmins worship god’s fourfold form “as a duty” (*kartavyatva*), is the first of the four Siddhāntas. Smith (1975: 296) suggests, quite correctly in my view, that this whole passage is an interpolation.
5. PauṣS 38.307c-309 claims that that which is known as ‘Pañcarātra’ is also called ‘Sadāgama’, the “good” or “true” tradition, and it describes it as the “root” or “foundation” (*mūla*) which is superior to Purāṇa, Veda, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya and Yoga on account of the fact that it reveals a superior fruit, i.e. the supreme *brahman*. PārS 10.244c-245c contains a portion of this short

passage, but in place of *pañcarātram iti smṛtam* (at PauṣS 38.308d) it has *ādyam vedam sanātanam* (“the first eternal Veda”, PārS 10.244b), by which it means the Ekāyanaveda.

6. As with the SS, the PauṣS contains a short section (relative to the text as a whole) in which Ekāyana Brahmins (*vipra*) are named as participating in rites together with specialists in the four Vedas. This section of the PauṣS (chapter 42) also has the following points in common with the relevant passages of the SS: the Ekāyana/Vaidika participation occurs during the ritual of installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) related to the construction of a temple; the account occurs very near the end of the text (in the case of the PauṣS it forms the penultimate chapter); the Ekāyanas know the mantras of the fourfold form of god (*cāturātmya*) (42.31cd), and they are said to represent these forms in the ritual context (42.125ab); at the fire-sacrifice (*homa*) the Ekāyanas are seated in the cardinal directions, and the Vaidikas are seated in the ordinal directions (42.331-32); the Ekāyanas recite Vedic mantras (42.145c-147b, 180).
7. In the final chapter of the PauṣS (43.160cd), the devotees who worship no other god (*nānyayājīn*), who are elsewhere called ‘Ekāyana’ and ‘Ekāntin’, are said to include Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.
8. Lastly, it is notable that in PauṣS 42 the preceptor is explicitly said to recite both Vedic and Pāñcarātriaka mantras (148-149b), and also Ekāyana mantras (188ab, 190cd).

#### iv.) Conclusions

Although there are references in the JS, SS and PauṣS to Ekāyana mantras and to “twice born” (*dvija*) Ekāyanas and Ekāyana Brahmins (*vipra*), and despite there being an indubitable link between the Pāñcarātrika Ekāyana tradition and Kashmir, as well as a possible allusion to the idea of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s ĀD,<sup>252</sup> the earliest clear Pāñcarātrika references to an *ekāyanaśruti* or an *ekāyanaveda* occur only in the later, South Indian works, namely the ĀP, the PādS and the PārS. Moreover, among the passages in the JS, SS and PauṣS which refer to the Ekāyana recension and the Ekāyana Brahmins, those in the JS and SS are demonstrably later additions to these texts. We can be fairly sure that the passage in the JS which refers to mantras belonging to the Ekāyana *śākhā* is a product of South India, and it seems likely, owing to their many similarities, that SS 24-25 and PauṣS 42 were composed in similar environments.

The only portions of the JS and the SS which refer to the Ekāyana *śākhā*, or to Ekāyana Brahmins, occur within the context of prescriptions for installation rites in public temples. The PauṣS’s references to the Ekāyanas are more scattered, but PauṣS 42 also depicts them as participating in temple rituals with non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas. Each of these text-portions (i.e. JS 20.265-270, SS 24-25 and PauṣS 42) are bereft of any obvious indication of intra-Pāñcarātra sectarianism, and are thus at variance with other portions of the PauṣS, as well as with portions of the PādS and PārS which have been addressed earlier, wherein Ekāyana and non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrins are very clearly at odds with one another. In the scriptural literature, references to an ‘Ekāyanaveda’ occur only in the latter context, which may indicate that this climate of sectarianism was already current in the time of Yāmuna, for he writes of an *ekāyanaśruti*, and describes the Ekāyana worship of god in accordance with the “five times” (*pañcakāla*) as the “single means” for attaining to the Bhagavat.

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<sup>252</sup> At ĀD 4.139ab, the character known as Dairyarāśi refers to “the designation ‘Veda’ that people apply to the texts (*vacana*) of the Pāñcarātra”. See Dezső (2005: 237).



The understanding of Ekāyana as meaning “the only way” also appears to have emerged during this period. This interpretation of the term appears to represent a significant revision of the original sense of *ekāyana*, which very likely denoted a “single goal”. The origins of the Pāñcarātriḱa use of the term may go back to an explanation of the name Nārāyaṇa which is contained in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. The forthrightly exclusivist reading of *ekāyana* as “the only way” is, at any rate, very much at odds with the inclusive attitude displayed in the JS, wherein several distinct Vaiṣṇava denominations recite the Ekāyana mantras. Of course this scenario might not reflect the historical reality, but it can tell us something about the intentions of the author of this passage, which appear to be more consistent with the authors of the much later scriptural works such as the ŚrīprśS and the ŚrīpurS. In these texts, as we have seen, the term *ekāyana* is used to denote the Pāñcarātra in general, which also appears to be the case in JS 20.265-270. This may mean that this passage itself belongs to a much later period or, perhaps more likely, that the culture of Pāñcarātriḱa sectarianism was both succeeded and preceded by more “inclusive” and cooperative intra-Pāñcarātra relations.

The question as to why a group of Pāñcarātrikas began to refer to an Ekāyanaveda, and to present the Ekāyana as the “only way” now needs to be asked. It seems probable that this question is linked also to why Pāñcarātriḱa redactors decided to add passages to the SS and the PauṣS in which Ekāyanas are shown to participate in public temple rites. These insertions were added, I propose, by authors who were eager to demonstrate that Ekāyanas were, contrary to what their rivals within the Pāñcarātra were claiming (at e.g. PādS *cp* 21.43-46), qualified to perform installation rites “for others” (*parārtha*), and that there was scriptural support for this. Moreover, the Ekāyanas considered themselves to be the “real” Pāñcarātrikas, and felt their status to be under threat on account of the fact that certain non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas (the “mixed worshippers”) could claim association with the Veda. This may well have convinced the Ekāyanas to make a concerted effort to establish their own distinct religious identity, and to claim their own Veda.

## 6. The Pāñcarātra Teaching and the Authority of the Nārāyaṇīya

### i.) The Nārāyaṇīya in the transmission of the teaching (śāstrāvatarāṇa)

In her illuminating work on the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS), Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 35) identifies two main layers of this text: i.) an older layer “representing what we may call a tantric way of thinking”, which she also refers to as “the ritualistic corpus”; and ii.) a younger layer representing “a more orthodox brahmanical and devotional attitude”. The latter, at least, was very probably composed in South India (ibid.: 147). Czerniak-Drożdżowicz notes that the account of the ParS’s revelation and transmission, which belongs to the younger layer of the text and which forms the “frame story” of its first and final chapters, explicitly connects the teaching of the ParS with that given in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. It does this in a number of ways, including setting the scene of the revelation in the same mythical place, namely White Island (*śvetadvīpa*). As has been mentioned above, we find the same strategy in the opening chapter of the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, and it is also present in the *śāstrāvatarāṇa* sections of other South Indian works, such as the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, for example, and the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā*. Grünendahl (see especially 1989: 34ff) shows that such strategies are not limited to the Saṃhitās, for they can also be found, for example, in the *Viṣṇudharmāḥ* and the *Viṣṇurahasya*.

Allusions to the *Nārāyaṇīya* are so common in the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus that they cannot, it seems, tell us very much about the particular Pāñcarātrika identities of the authors who make use of them. Both Ekāyana and non-Ekāyana authors connect their own texts to the *Nārāyaṇīya*. However, it is notable that, of the older Saṃhitās, the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS) makes no reference to the *Nārāyaṇīya* in its brief opening chapter on the transmission of the teaching and that, indeed, the only obvious reference to it in the entire work is in the final chapter, where it is said that the temple (*devatāyatana*) is “equivalent to White Island” (*śvetadvīpasamam*, SS 25.310ab). As I have argued above, I strongly suspect this chapter to be a later

addition to the SS. In my view it was probably added in South India, though there is little internal evidence for this. It is also quite likely, in my view, that the opening chapter of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), the so-called “beginning of the teaching” (*śāstrārambha*), together with the first 30 verses of its second chapter, do not belong to the oldest layer of this text, though this is rather more difficult to establish. Before the interpolation of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, this section (JS 1.1-2.30), at any rate, clearly formed a textual unit. There are, as Grünendahl (1997: 363-364) has noted, a number of themes, stories, incidents, characters and geographical locations here which are clearly borrowed from the *Nārāyaṇīya*. One of my reasons for suspecting that this section of the JS may have been a later addition is that none of these (other than Nārada, who receives the teaching of which the JS is an abridgement) are referred to again, and nor is Śāṇḍilya, one of the main interlocutors in this extended passage. The *Paṇḍarasamhitā*, meanwhile, does not contain a history of the transmission of the teaching.

The appeals to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, which we find particularly in the South Indian scriptural literature, are motivated, undoubtedly, by the desire to locate these works within an ancient and authoritative tradition. In their quest to align the Pāñcarātra with orthodox Brahminical culture, the authors of the Saṃhitās were greatly helped by the fact that this section of the epic declares itself to be “the great secret teaching” (*mahopaniṣadam*), “spoken of as the Pañcarātra” (*pañcarātrānuśabditam*, MBh 12.326.100). This proclamation alone ensured that the name ‘Pañcarātra’ would always carry a certain prestige, and it is no surprise that several Saṃhitās also describe themselves as *mahopaniṣad* (e.g. PādS *jp* 1.28, 71 and in the colophons, PārS 10.141, 14.494, 15.987c-989, ĪS 18.514-515 etc.). As with the allusions to the *Nārāyaṇīya* in the *śāstrāvatarāṇa* narratives, the employment in scriptural works of terms such as *mahopaniṣad* indicate that people reading and using these texts were familiar with the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Ordinarily, the authors of these allusions and references are simply “name-dropping”, rather than venturing to engage in any genuine way with the *Nārāyaṇīya*’s content. However, in this chapter I will be addressing a scriptural work of the Pāñcarātra which refers to itself as *mahopaniṣad*,

but whose authors appear to be have been making a genuine attempt to continue, and to bring up to date, the project undertaken by the authors of the *Nārāyaṇīya*.

ii.) *The original teaching according to the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā*

Into the reasonably tidy arrangement of, on the one hand, Pāñcarātrikas who claim a Vedic origin for their scriptures, who perform “mixed worship” and who, in some works, refer to their own tradition as the Mantrasiddhānta, and on the other hand, the Ekāyanas or Āgamasiddhāntins, who adhere to the Ekāyanaveda and who claim *this* to be the original scripture from which both the Vedas and the Pāñcarātra Samhitās derive, we encounter the *Ahirbudhnyasamhitā* (AS). In this brief section, I provide a summary of the AS’s own account of the “original teaching”, before addressing the question of what this account might be able to tell us about the motivations of the authors of this text, and the kind of Pāñcarātra culture to which they belonged.

Among the published Samhitās, the AS is something of an oddity, though as we will see below, it does share a number of traits with the *Lakṣmītantra*. Perhaps its most striking feature is its relative lack of information on temple worship. Although its 28<sup>th</sup> chapter describes the sequence for the rites of worship in the pillared hall of a temple (*maṇḍapa*), and in several other chapters kings are exhorted to build temples (e.g. AS 42.40c ff, 45.32c ff) and to worship (e.g. AS 29, 36.33c-49b) or to perform other rites (e.g. AS 39.6 ff) therein,<sup>253</sup> the procedures for the construction of temples and the installation and worship of images are only dealt with summarily in each of these cases. In addition, only one of its sixty chapters is concerned with the initiation rites (*dīkṣā*), while there is nothing said at all, for instance, on the rites of reparation (*prāyaścitta*). As Schrader’s (1916) summary of the AS shows, much of this work is taken up with theological and cosmological issues, with descriptions of mantras and

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<sup>253</sup> Many chapters in the AS are addressed, either directly or indirectly (i.e. by way of mythical narratives), to kings. See for example chapters 26, 29, 30, 36, 37, 39, 42, and 45-50.

yantras, and with eulogies to Sudarśana, Viṣṇu's personified discus and the manifestation of his will (*saṃkalpa*, see e.g. AS 3.39ab).

Although it has probably received more scholarly attention than any other Pāñcarātra work, the date and provenance of the AS remain difficult to determine. In contrast to the conclusions drawn by earlier scholars such as Schrader (1916) and Matsubara (1994), both of whom suggested a very early (c. seventh-eighth century) date and a Kashmirian origin, recent scholarship has tended to favour a much later date (c. eleventh-thirteenth century) as well as a *South Indian* provenance.<sup>254</sup> Rastelli (2005: 116) notes that both the PādS and the PārS borrow from the AS, and that the latter is therefore the earlier work. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the composition of the AS occurred only very shortly before that of the PādS, since neither text appears to have been written before the career of Rāmānuja.<sup>255</sup> This would place the most likely date of AS's composition somewhere between c. 1150-1200 CE, or shortly thereafter.<sup>256</sup>

In view of its currently accepted South Indian provenance and its probable date, the contents of the AS are even more surprising. For in stark contrast to the works I

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<sup>254</sup> On the question of the dating and provenance of the AS, see especially Begley (1973: 27-28) who writes: "The descriptions [of multi-armed forms of Sudarśana] are described in great detail in the *Samhitā* text [the AS]. The descriptions correspond closely to icons of a type not found before the thirteenth century, and then only in South India. These facts strongly suggest that the *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā* (and perhaps many other "early" works of the Pāñcarātra literary corpus) cannot be much earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth century, and that South India ... is the most likely place of its composition." Begley argues (*ibid.*: 28 n. 143), "[I]t seems indisputable... that the iconographic portions of the text must be approximately contemporaneous with the images described." More recent scholarship includes that of Sanderson (2001: 35-38), who proposes that both the AS and the *Lakṣmītantra* postdate the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* of the Kashmirian Śaiva scholar Kṣemarāja, who flourished c. 1000-1050. Sanderson also argues that both the AS's and the LT's interpretations of Yajurvedic mantras belonging to the *Taittirīya* recension point to their South Indian origin. See also Bock-Raming (2002: 310-311, 349) who concurs with the conclusions drawn by Begley, and Rastelli (2005: 116) who writes: "The earliest absolutely datable text that quotes the *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā* is the *Prapannaparijāta* of Vātsya Varadaguru, who was probably born between 1190-1200."

<sup>255</sup> Rastelli (2005) points out that the AS shows the influence of Viśiṣṭādvaitavedāntin ideas. If we discount the *Nityagrantha*, the traditional attribution of which to Rāmānuja has been challenged by several modern scholars, none of the works broadly accepted to have been composed by Rāmānuja refer to the AS. Bearing in mind the proximity of theological elements within the AS to elements of Rāmānuja's own thought, and given Rāmānuja's apparent familiarity with the Pāñcarātra literature, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, that the AS was not in circulation in South India during Rāmānuja's time.

<sup>256</sup> Peter Bisschop has informed me, in an email dated 17/04/2012, that the AS's (42.35) reference to the worship of Viśveśvara by a king of Vārāṇasī cannot predate the twelfth century, since "the name of Viśveśvara as the central *liṅga* in Vārāṇasī is not attested before the twelfth century and represents a significant departure from the period preceding it".

have addressed above which were also composed in South India during this period, not only does the AS largely disregard temple worship, it also gives no indication whatsoever of the intra-Pāñcarātra sectarianism we have encountered. It does not claim affiliation with any distinct Pāñcarātra tradition or ‘Siddhānta’, and nor, as far as I can tell, is there any other allusion or clue to internal divisions within the Pāñcarātra. There is no mention here, for example, of “mixed worshippers”, or of Ekāyanas or Ekāntins.<sup>257</sup> This may indicate that the AS was composed before the ideas of the Ekāyanaveda and of the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas became current. However, given that the AS does not refer to *any* divisions within the Pāñcarātra, it is perhaps more likely that if its authors were aware of such divisions – and we can be certain, as we have seen, that they existed prior to the AS’s composition – then they chose to omit any reference to them.

Nevertheless, if we attempt to situate this work within the Pāñcarātrika environment mapped out in the presumably more or less contemporary PādS and PārS, it is immediately evident from the AS’s frequent use of Vedic mantras that we can locate it within the domain of hybrid Pāñcarātrika/Vaidika worship that is presented in those works as indicative of the ‘Mantrasiddhānta’.<sup>258</sup> However, the AS does not claim a Vedic origin for the Pāñcarātra scriptures, as do other works which prescribe “mixed worship”. Rather, in a manner more similar to the self-descriptions found in the works connected to the Āgamasiddhānta (i.e. the PārS and the ĪS), the AS claims that the Vedas *and* the Pāñcarātra scriptures are in fact both derived from an earlier, original teaching. As will become clear in the following summary, the AS,

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<sup>257</sup> There is, however, an allusion to ‘Ekāyana’ at AS 54.5a. In a passage which praises the Nārasiṃha mantra by claiming it to be the foundational support (*upajīvyatva*) of the various teachings Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra, Vedānta and Pāśupata, the mantra is said to be “the single path” of the Sāttvatas i.e. Pāñcarātrikas. The passage AS 54.4-5 reads as follows: *sāṃkhyānām paramaṃ jñānam idam eva mahāmune / iyaṃ sopānabhūmiḥ sā yoginām niyatātmanām // tad etad ayanam hy ekaṃ sāttvatānām mahātmanām / etat trayyantasarvasvam etat pāśupatam matam //* – “This [Nārasiṃha mantra] is assuredly the supreme knowledge of the Sāṃkhyas, O great sage. This is that [highest] stage [reached] by the [eight] steps [see AS 31.16-32.76] of the self-disciplined Yogins. This, indeed, is that single path of the eminent Sāttvatas. This is the entirety of Vedānta, this is the Pāśupata doctrine.”

<sup>258</sup> On the AS’s use of Vedic mantras, see especially chapters 57-59. Elsewhere, the Kriyāśakti of Viṣṇu is said to consist of both Vedic and Tantric mantras (AS 16.9-10b). See also the prescription for the “assignation of the [parts of the mantra] seer etc.” onto the initiate’s body (*ṛṣyādīnyāsa*) at AS 20.19c-20b. Hanneder (1997: 158) writes that “with the *ṛṣyādīnyāsa* Tantric mantras themselves are vedicized.”

like the PārS, incorporates this idea of the original teaching from the *Nārāyaṇīya*, but it appears to utilise this teaching for different purposes.

In the seventh chapter of the AS we are told that the ancient Manus established a teaching (*śāstra*) following a “loss of knowledge” (*jñānabhraṃśa*) among a previously omniscient mankind. The path enjoined in this teaching is said to lead to the highest goal (AS 7.61c-63b). This account is inconsistent, however, with the much fuller description of the original teaching that is contained in the eleventh chapter. Here it is said that at the beginning of creation (*ādisarga*) the *sattva guṇa* was predominant, but over the course of time the growth of *rajas* and *tamas* led to the destruction of the sāttvic divine law (*sāttvikī divyā māryādā*)<sup>259</sup> by assorted Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas (AS 11.4-8b).<sup>260</sup> *Śāstra* is declared as one of the two means by which these enemies of *dharma* (*dharmadveṣin*) might be defeated, the other means being Viṣṇu’s array of weapons (*śāstrāstravyūha*, AS 11.12c-13b). Accordingly, at that time the original teaching (*ādiśāstra*) appeared from the sky “like the sound of thunder” (*nirghātaśabdavat*, AS 11.17ab).<sup>261</sup> It is said that this single *śāstra*, teaching the true *dharma*, was born from the “will” or “desire” of Viṣṇu (*viṣṇoḥ saṃkalpajāt*). It was spoken by Saṃkarṣaṇa and consisted of a million chapters (*niyutādhyāyaka*) (AS 11.47c-9). It contained within itself the meaning or purport of all teachings (*sarvaśāstrārthagarbhitatva*, AS 11.20), which, according to the passage that follows this claim (AS 11.20-48), include the Vedas (incorporating not only the four canonical Vedas, but also the six auxiliary “limbs”, *vedāṅga*), Itihāsa and Purāṇa, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Pāśupata.

At first, the ancient progenitors of the human race (the Manus and Mānavas) and the earliest humans themselves all acted in accordance with this single *śāstra* to the satisfaction of the Lord (AS 11.49-50b). Then, owing to the deterioration of time

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<sup>259</sup> Somewhat confusingly this “divine law” is called Vedic (*vaidika*) in the verse heading to 11.8ab. This seems out of place given that the Vedas are yet to be “fashioned” (*tataḥ*) (11.57c) from the original teaching (*ādiśāstra*).

<sup>260</sup> Cf. MBh 12.330.52c-53b: *vedā na pratibhānti sma ṛṣṇāṃ bhāvitātmanām || devān rajas tamaś caiva samāvivīśatus tadā |*.

<sup>261</sup> The use of this metaphor to describe the origin of scripture also occurs in the *Lakṣmītantra* (4.17cd: *śāstraṃ saṃkarṣaṇād eva bhāti nirghātaśabdavat*), and may have been borrowed from a passage in the JS (1.76b-79), wherein the transformation (*vikāra*) of divine consciousness into scripture (*śāstra*), a process that is called *śabdabrahman*, is likened to a thunderstorm arising from a formless atmosphere (JS 1.76cd: *amūrtād* (corr. *amūrtād*) *gaganād yadvat nirghāto jāyate svayam*).

(*kālavipāryāsa*) brought about by the division of the Ages (*yuga*), at the start of the Tretā Age, when eminent Brahmins began desiring pleasures (*kāma*), the teaching took on a dull appearance (*mandapracāra*) (AS 50c-52b). At this time the original *śāstra* was divided into separate parts (*aṃśa*), with the sage Apāntaratapas fashioning the three Vedas, Kapila the Sāṃkhya *śāstra*, Hiranyagarbha the Yoga *śāstra*, Śiva the Pāśupata teaching, and “Viṣṇu himself alone, having extracted the essence from that single divine teaching, created the true tradition (*sadāgama*), the system (*tantra*) called Pañcarātra, which describes his own nature as *para*, *vyūha* and *vibhava*, and which is characterised by having liberation as its only fruit.”<sup>262</sup>

If we compare this characterisation of the original teaching with the account of the first teaching that is contained in the PārS, a few obvious differences emerge. Firstly, whilst the PārS repeatedly calls this original scripture the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ or ‘root-Veda’ (*mūlaveda*), the AS, in common with the *Nārāyaṇīya*, does not use the word *veda* in its description of the original teaching. Here it is referred to in decidedly neutral terms such as *ādisāstra*, or simply *śāstra*, the scriptural designation ‘Veda’ remaining conventionally denotative of the body of literature comprising the four Vedas and their “auxiliary” and “subordinate” branches of learning (*vedāṅga* and *upaveda*). In the PārS’s account, the appropriation of the name ‘Veda’ is designed to convey the fact that the *real* Veda is precisely the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ and it is in such a context that the “conventional” Vedas are called the “*changed* Vedas” (*vikāavedāḥ*, PārS 1.75c). In keeping with this method of appropriation, as we have seen, the original teaching is not merely *called* ‘Veda’, it also takes on the characteristics of *śruti* as conceived in the Brahminical *imaginaire*. Thus, according to the PārS (19.524-526b), and to the ĪS (21.561b-563) which contains the same passage, the Ekāyanaveda does not have a personal (i.e. human or divine etc.) origin (*apauruṣeya*). It is, in other words, like the Veda in traditional Mīmāṃsaka hermeneutics, “authorless”.

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<sup>262</sup> AS 11.62c-65b: *sadāgamam ayāt tasmāt kevalād divyaśāsanāt // nirmame sāram uddhṛtya svayaṃ viṣṇur asaṅkulam / tat paravyūhavibhavasvabhāvādinirūpaṇam // pañcarātrāhvayaṃ tantraṃ mokṣaikaphalalakṣaṇam / sudarśanāhvayo yo ’sau saṅkalpo vaiṣṇavaḥ paraḥ // sa svayaṃ bibhide tena pañcadhā pañcavaktragaḥ /*



In the AS's account which I have summarised above, the original teaching is depicted, alongside Viṣṇu's array of weapons, as having been brought into existence in order to defeat the enemies of *dharma*. Each of these "twofold means" is presented as being a manifestation of Viṣṇu's will or desire (*saṃkalpa*).<sup>263</sup> Elsewhere we are told that this *saṃkalpa* specifically denotes the "desire" or "intention" of *brahman*, equated here with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa (e.g. AS 3.41), to become *manifest*, as in the Upaniṣadic formula "May I become many" (*bahu syām iti*),<sup>264</sup> which is articulated by *brahman* at AS 2.62cd. Accordingly, when the AS depicts the original teaching as being "born from the desire of Viṣṇu" (*viṣṇoḥ saṃkalpajāt*, AS 11.48), we may assume that this is to be understood as meaning that it is born from Viṣṇu's desire to become manifest in order to defeat the enemies of *dharma*. In this way, the origin of the first teaching at the beginning of creation (*ādisarga*) is shown to have occurred as a *personal* response to a particular situation. In other words, the AS is not presenting the *ādisāstra* here as something "uncreated" or "non-personal" (*apauruṣeya*), as the Ekāyanaveda is portrayed by Āgamasiddhāntin authors, since it is implicit in the *apauruṣeyatva* theory that scripture comes into being alongside time rather than within it.<sup>265</sup>

Of course, insofar as the *ādisāstra* is a manifestation of Viṣṇu's *saṃkalpa*, it is to be understood also as a manifestation of a part of Viṣṇu himself, and in this sense it is, like god, both immanent in creation *and* transcendent to it. Accordingly, it is not said in the AS that Viṣṇu "composed" the *ādisāstra*, rather the author employs a number of more or less synonymous adjectives, from the verbal roots *ut + pat-*, *ud + i-*, and *ut + thā-* (at, respectively, AS 11.13cd, 11.16ab, 11.18ab) which convey the sense "arising from", "originating from" etc. It appears important to the author of this passage that, in keeping with the Pāñcarātriśa theological doctrine that Viṣṇu is a

<sup>263</sup> See especially AS 11.12c-16b. Viṣṇu's *saṃkalpa* plays a prominent role in the AS and, as mentioned above, is "personified" as Sudarśana. See e.g. AS 3.39ab, 5.7ab, 7.66cd, 10.41cd.

<sup>264</sup> See e.g. *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* 6.2.3. This is quoted several times by Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya*. See especially, in his comments on *sūtra* 2.3.14 (339.6), the phrase *bahu syām iti saṃkalpaḥ*.

<sup>265</sup> However, in another passage in the AS the *apauruṣeyatva* theory *does* appear to be applied to scripture. At AS 55.16, Saṃkarṣaṇa is said to "vomit out" (*udgirati*) and then to "swallow up" (*girati*) the "pure teaching" (*amalaṃ śāstram*). When this is read in conjunction with AS 54.17cd (*udgiraty akhilaṃ viśvam udgīrṇaṃ grasati svayam*), the emergence and disappearance of scripture appears to be parallel to the emergence and disappearance of the universe itself.

transcendent personal god, the teaching in its transcendent form remains itself resolutely tied to the personal. Thus the original teaching is said to be “*eternally* spoken by Kāmapāla (i.e. Viṣṇu)” (*ayaṃ śāstraṃ... proktaṃ kāmapālena śāśvatam*, AS 11.19).

Other notable differences between the PārS’s and the AS’s accounts of the original teaching include the fact that the designation “true tradition” (*sadāgama*) is given to the Pāñcarātra system (*tantra*) in the AS, whereas in the PārS it is given to the original teaching, the Ekāyanaveda. Similarly, in the AS, “having liberation as its only fruit” is said to be characteristic of the Pāñcarātra, whereas in the PārS (1.16c-19b) it is the Ekāyanaveda that is characterised in this way, while the Saṃhitās are said to bestow both liberation and enjoyments (*bhoga*). Certainly the overall impression is that the author of this passage in the AS is generally less concerned with praising the original teaching than is the author of the relevant passages in the PārS. Other than that which I have summarised, there is virtually nothing said about the particularity of the first teaching in the AS. There is no obvious desire to expressly link this teaching with the teaching which is described in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, as there is in the PārS. There is no mention of the Citraśikkhāndins, or of Śvetadvīpa or of King Vasu Uparicara in the context of the first teaching here, even though the latter two are mentioned elsewhere in the text. Rather, the author of this section of the AS is much more concerned with the five teachings that the original *śāstra* is divided into, namely the Vedas, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāśupata and Pāñcarātra.

These five systems are also listed together, along with the names of their promulgators, as the different fields of knowledge in the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh 12.337.60-63b). Just as the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh 12.330.30-31) declares that, for instance, Kapila and Hiraṇyagarbha are in fact names of Nārāyaṇa, so too in the second chapter of the AS, Kapila, Hiraṇyagarbha, Apāntaratapas and Śiva are all declared to be among the various names by which Nārāyaṇa is known.<sup>266</sup> In the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh 12.337.63c-64b) it is said that Nārāyaṇa is the “culmination” or

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<sup>266</sup> See AS 2.22 (on the equivalence of the “supreme *brahman*” and Nārāyaṇa), and 2.37-39 for these other names. It is notable in this context that when, in the eighth chapter, Nārada asks Ahirbudhnya why there are so many conflicting accounts of reality (*tattva*), one of the reasons which Ahirbudhnya gives is simply that people are ignorant of synonyms (*aparyāyavid*, AS 8.14ab).

“goal” (*niṣṭhā*) of each of these systems, and similarly the AS (12.54) states that Viṣṇu is their goal (*niṣṭhā*). In the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT), the Pāñcarātra scriptural work which appears to have the most in common with the AS, and which may belong to a similar period and region (see Gupta 2000: xxxvii), it is said that Lakṣmī is their goal:

*eṣā sā paramā niṣṭhā sām̐khyānām veditātmanām // eṣā sā yoginām niṣṭhā yatra gatvā na śocati / eṣā pāśupatiṁ niṣṭhā saiṣā vedavidām gatiḥ // pañcarātrasya kṛtsnasya saiṣā niṣṭhā sanātani /* – “She [Lakṣmī] is this supreme goal of the Sām̐khyas who know the Self. She is this goal of the Yogins, having arrived at which there is no suffering. She is this goal that is Pāśupati, this goal of those who know the Vedas, this eternal goal of the entire Pāñcarātra.” (LT 1.41c-43b)

Clearly both the AS and the LT are incorporating the *Nārāyaṇīya* teaching in this instance. However, both of these works seek to utilise this teaching not as a justification for an elitist identification with the ‘original Veda’, as does the PārS, but rather as an authority which legitimates these five branches of knowledge, and inclusively integrates them into the Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. In the following, I undertake a fuller discussion of this method of inclusivism or syncretism that is found in the AS and the LT, and ask if it might tell us something about the context from which these works emerged.

### *iii.) Syncretism and the five teachings*

In the passages summarised above, both the AS and the LT adopt a position which is close to that which we find in the *Nārāyaṇīya* itself. In a verse which is subsequently quoted by both Yāmuna (ĀP 133.6-7) and Rāmānuja (see below), the *Nārāyaṇīya* presents the ‘Pāñcarātra’ as a single inclusive system which contains the “Āraṇyaka of the Vedas”, Sām̐khya and Yoga as “mutually complementary parts”.<sup>267</sup> In a

<sup>267</sup> MBh 12.336.76abcd: *evam ekaṁ sām̐khyayogaṁ vedāraṇyakam eva ca / parasparaṅgāny etāni pañcarātraṁ ca kathyate //*.

sectarian religious context, this attitude of “inclusivism” or “tolerance”<sup>268</sup> is normally associated, not unfairly, with the Śaiva tradition of the Mantramārga, and with works such as the *Svacchandatantra*, whose appeal that “one should not censure Sāṃkhya, Yoga, the Pāñcarātra and the Veda because they all originate from Śiva, and indeed [all] grant liberation as their fruit”<sup>269</sup> was later quoted approvingly by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka* (TĀ).<sup>270</sup> Such an approach stands in stark contrast to that adopted by Yāmuna in his ĀP, wherein the Śaiva scriptures (*āgama*), for example, are denounced as being “outside the Veda” (*vedabāhya*), and the only motivation of Rudra, their author, is said to be that of “bewildering” those who are qualified for this “corruption” of the Vedic path.<sup>271</sup>

Rāmānuja’s attitude towards the other traditions listed in the *Nārāyaṇīya* is more ambiguous. On occasion in his *Śrībhāṣya*, for example, Rāmānuja unequivocally rejects the world-view (*darśana*) of the Sāṃkhyas, which he condemns as being “opposed to the Veda” (*vipratīṣiddham vedam*, *Śrībhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.2.9). He also lists Kapila among the teachers of false doctrines: “It is said that owing to their falsity and because they are outside the Veda, the doctrines of Kapila, Kaṇāda, the Buddha and the Arhat should be ignored by those who desire the highest good.”<sup>272</sup> However, elsewhere Rāmānuja remarks that “the view of Kapila, although it is rejected as contrary to scripture and logic, is [nonetheless] accepted in part by Vaidikas, on account of such theories as the pre-existence of the effect in the cause.”<sup>273</sup> Rāmānuja also has a rather ambiguous attitude towards the Pāśupatas. In his comments on *sūtras* 2.2.35-38, which draw heavily on Yāmuna’s ĀP (91.14ff),

<sup>268</sup> See Granoff (1992: 287 n. 5), who writes: “On the basis of a limited acquaintance with the Pāñcarātra, I would suspect that the tolerance for other groups displayed in the Northern Śaiva Tantras is not a feature of the Pāñcarātra, which is far more typical of medieval Indian religion in its hostility to the scripture of other groups.”

<sup>269</sup> *Svacchandatantra* 5.44c-45b: *sāṃkhyam yogam pāñcarātram vedāṃś caiva na nindayet // yataḥ śivodbhavāḥ sarve hy apavargaphalapradāḥ /*.

<sup>270</sup> TĀ 35.36. Abhinavagupta (TĀ 35.30-37) argues that the single tradition called ‘Kula’ presents itself in various ways in accordance with the diversity among its followers.

<sup>271</sup> ĀP 98.5-7: *tathā tatraiva bhagavān rudraḥ prastutaśaivādyāgamānām svayam eva vedabāhyatvam vedamārgāpabhraṣṭajanādhikāritvam tad vyāmohaikaprayojanatām ca darśayati*.

<sup>272</sup> *Śrībhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.2.35 (327.22-23): *kapilakaṇādasugatārhatamatānām asāmañjasyāt* (corr. *asāmañjasyāt*) *vedabāhyatvāc ca niśśreyasārthibhir anādarāṇīyatvam uktam*.

<sup>273</sup> *Śrībhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.2.16 (315.19-20): *kapilapakṣasya śrutinyāyavirodhaparitāyaktasyāpi satkāryavādādīnā kvacid aṃśe vaidikāḥ parigraho ’sti*.

the doctrine of Paśupati (*paśupatimata*) is denounced as being contrary to the Veda (*vedaviruddha*, e.g. at *Śrībhāṣya* 329.11-12), and akin to the doctrines of Kapila and Kaṇāda et al., insofar as it is false (*asāmañjasya*) and to be ignored (*anādarāṇīya*, *Śrībhāṣya* 327.23-328.1). Here, the followers of Paśupati are criticised both for their theological and soteriological teachings, and for their religious practices. However, in his comments on *sūtra* 2.2.42, wherein the validity of the Pañcarātra system (*tantra*) is argued for, and the *Nārāyaṇīya* appealed to on several occasions, Rāmānuja approaches the Pāśupata, as well as Sāṃkhya and Yoga, with a different perspective.<sup>274</sup> Thus, quoting the aforementioned MBh 12.336.76, Rāmānuja explains that Sāṃkhya, Yoga, the Vedas and the Āraṇyakas all constitute “the one Pañcarātra”, and that they are all devoted to propounding a single truth.<sup>275</sup> Rāmānuja elaborates on this claim as follows:

*sāṅkhyoktāni pañcaviṃśatitattvāni, yogoktaṃ ca yamaniyamādyātmakam  
yogaṃ, vedoditakarmasvarūpāṇy aṅgīkṛtya tattvānām brahmātmakatvaṃ,  
yogasya ca brahmopāsanaprakāratvaṃ karmaṇām ca tadārāadhanarūpatām  
abhidadhati, brahmasvarūpaṃ pratipādayanty āraṇyakāni / etad eva pareṇa  
brahmaṇā nārāyaṇena svayam eva pañcarātratantre viśadīkṛtaṃ – iti /  
śārīrake ca sāṅkhyoktatattvānām abrahmātmakatāmātraṃ nirākṛtaṃ; na  
svarūpaṃ / yogapāśupatayoś ceśvarasya kevalanimitakāraṇatā,  
parāvaratattvaviparītakalpanā, vedabahiṣkṛtācāro nirākṛtaḥ; na yogasvarūpaṃ,  
paśupatisvarūpaṃ ca / ataḥ ‘sāṅkhyam yogaḥ pañcarātraṃ vedāḥ pāśupatam  
tathā / ātmapramāṇāny etāni na hantavyāni hetubhiḥ’ iti tattadabhihitatattat-  
svarūpamātraṃ aṅgīkāryam; jinasugatābhihitatattvavat sarvaṃ na bahiṣkāryam  
ity ucyate /.* – “Accepting the twenty-five principles spoken of in Sāṃkhya, the  
yoga consisting of restraint and piety etc. as spoken of in Yoga, and the forms of  
ritual taught in the Veda, the Āraṇyakas set forth the nature of *brahman* [as

<sup>274</sup> It is notable that in his remarks on *sūtra* 2.2.42, when commenting on MBh 12.326.100 (*idaṃ mahopaniṣadam caturvedasamanvitam / sāṅkhyayogakṛtaṃ tena pañcarātrānuśabditam*), Rāmānuja identifies the terms ‘Sāṃkhya’ and ‘Yoga’ as referring to, respectively, the yoga of knowledge (*jñānayoga*) and the yoga of action (*karmayoga*). He cites the *Bhagavadgītā* (3.3cd) in support of this (*Śrībhāṣya* 333.11-12). Conversely, in his comments on *sūtras* 2.2.1-2.2.9, Rāmānuja explicitly identifies ‘Sāṃkhya’ with the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, from which he quotes a number of times. The question as to “which” Sāṃkhya Rāmānuja is referring in his commentary on 2.2.42 is beyond the scope of the present work, but suffice to say that it should not necessarily be assumed that he intends the ‘Sāṃkhya’ of the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* and its commentaries.

<sup>275</sup> *Śrībhāṣya* (334.16-18): *sāṅkhyam ca yogaś ca sāṅkhyayogaṃ, vedāś cāraṇyakāni ca vedāraṇyakam, parasparāṅgāny etāni, ekatattvapatipādanaparatayaikībhūtāni ekaṃ pañcarātraṃ iti kathyate*. Note that Rāmānuja takes *vedāraṇyakam* here to be a *samāhāradvandva* compound. As is indicated in my above reading of MBh 12.336.76, I take *vedāraṇyakam* in the *Nārāyaṇīya* to be a *tatpuruṣa* compound. This, I believe, is supported by MBh 12.331.2-3, where we find (at 3c) a reference to “the Āraṇyaka from the Vedas” (*āraṇyakam ca vedebyaḥ*). The context here implies that the Āraṇyaka is the best part of the Vedas.

follows]: they explain the principles [of Sāṃkhya] as having *brahman* as their nature, Yoga as a method of meditation upon *brahman*, and the rites [of the Veda] as consisting of the worship of *that* (i.e. *brahman*). This, indeed, has been explained by Nārāyaṇa, himself the supreme *brahman*, in the Pañcarātra system. In the *Śārīraka* (i.e. the *Brahmasūtra*), the principles spoken of in Sāṃkhya are rejected only insofar as [they are] not [described as] having the nature of *brahman*. It is not [the principles which are rejected] *per se*. And in Yoga and Pāśupata, it is the Lord's being merely the instrumental cause [of creation], the contradictory notions regarding the true essence of the totality of existence, and the conduct outlawed by the Veda that are rejected. It is not [that] Yoga and Pāśupati [are rejected] *per se*. Thus it is said, 'Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pañcarātra, the Vedas, and Pāśupata: these are the valid means of knowledge with regard to *ātman*, and they cannot be destroyed by logical arguments.' [Therefore] the bare essentials of each of the [world-views] set forth in these various [systems] are to be accepted. It is said [therefore] that not everything [in these systems] is to be rejected, as is the case with the [schemes of] reality set forth by the Jina and the Buddha." (*Śrībhāṣya* 334.18-335.2)

It is worth quoting Rāmānuja *in extenso* on the subject of Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the Pāśupata in order to highlight the differences between his own approach to these traditions and that which is found in the AS and the LT. Rāmānuja is especially critical of Sāṃkhya and the Pāśupata, and is accepting of these traditions' ontological and theological systems only when they are radically reinterpreted so as to conform to his own Vaiṣṇava Vedāntin outlook. As he says himself, "the reality of [each] principle such as *pradhāna*, *puruṣa* and *paśupati* that is taught in these systems is to be accepted only insofar as [that reality] is [recognised as] being identical with Nārāyaṇa, who is the supreme *brahman* known from the Vedānta."<sup>276</sup>

The claim in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the AS and the LT that Nārāyaṇa or Lakṣmī is the culmination or goal (*niṣṭhā*) of each of these traditions is also, of course, a "sectarian" re-reading of other soteriological systems, and can be justly interpreted as an attempt to include and thereby subordinate these alternative paths within an all-encompassing Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. A very similar strategy, albeit one without any obvious link to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, can be found in a short passage of the JS.<sup>277</sup> It is

<sup>276</sup> *Śrībhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.2.42 (334.5-6): *tattantrābhihitapradhānapuruṣapaśupatiprabhṛtitattvasya vedāntavedyaparabrahmabhūtanārāyaṇātmakatayaiva* [corr. *nārāyaṇātmakatayaiva*] *vastutvam abhyupagamanīyam*.

<sup>277</sup> JS 4.114c-118b: *anekābhiś ca saṃjñābhis tam avyayam upāsate // īśvaratvena viprendra puruṣatvena caiva hi / śivasūryātmakatvena somatvena tathāiva ca // agnīśomātmakatvena śabdatvenāpi vai punaḥ / jyotirjñānātmakatvena kālātvena ca nārada // jīvakṣetrātmakatvena bhūtātmakatvena vai tathā / evam ekaḥ paro devo nānāśaktyātmārūpadhṛt // nārāyaṇaḥ param*

notable that, unlike Rāmānuja, both the AS and the LT include Buddhist and Jain traditions, and also the Cārvākas or Lokāyatas within their inclusive framework:

*sa eva sarvabhūtānāṃ sraṣṭā pālayitāntakaḥ / sa eva śivarūpeṇa śaivair  
ārādhyate prabhuḥ // sa eva brahmarūpeṇa sṛjaty etac carācaram / sa eva  
pālayaty etad viṣṇur bhūtvā janārdanaḥ // sa eva rudrarūpeṇa saṃharaty  
akṣhilaṃ jagat / buddhātmanā ca bauddhānāṃ sa eva jagati sthitaḥ // sa  
evāśāmbarāṇāṃ (corr. eva śāmbarāṇāṃ) ca nirāvaraṇarūpadhṛt / sa eva  
cārvākamate jineśvaravapurdharaḥ // sa eva yājñikānāṃ ca  
yajñapūruṣasaṃjñakaḥ / mīmāṃsakaiḥ sa evāyam upāsyatvena codyate //  
kāpilaiḥ puruṣatvena sa evākhyāyate vibhuḥ /* – “He is the creator, protector  
and destroyer of all beings. The Lord is worshipped by Śaivas in the form of  
Śiva. In the form of Brahmā, he creates this world. As Viṣṇu, Janārdana protects  
this [world]. In the form of Rudra he destroys the world in its entirety. For  
Buddhists (*bauddha*), he exists in the world in the form of the Buddha, and for  
those who are sky-clad (*āśāmbara*, i.e. the Digambaras) he has an unveiled  
form. According to the doctrine of the Cārvākas, he has the form of the Lord of  
the Jinas. For the sacrificers he is called Yajñapūruṣa, and it is said that he is  
worshipped as this by the Mīmāṃsakas. The Lord is named as the Puruṣa by the  
Kāpilas.” (AS 33.15-20b)

*asyāṃ niṣṭhāya tattvajñā viśanti brahma manmayam / saiṣā tattvavidāṃ  
mukhyaiḥ śāstre śāstre vicinityate // otaṃ protam amuṣyāṃ vai  
jagacchabdārthatām ayam / anayaiva sadā sām̐khyaiḥ sām̐khyāye 'haṃ  
sanātānī // anayaiva samādhisthaiḥ samādhīye samādhinā / abhidhīye  
'nayaivāhaṃ śaivaiḥ ṣaṭtriṃśadantimā // mahārājñī tathaivāham anayaiva  
trayī parā / ṛgyajuḥsāmasaṃghāte cintye saure ca maṇḍale // taruṇīm  
rūpasampannām sarvāvayavasundarīm / anayaiva vyavasyanti  
lokāyatavicakṣaṇāḥ // kṣaṇabhaṅgavidhānājñaiḥ cintye nirviṣayā ca dhīḥ /  
ārhatāiḥ cānayaivāhaṃ yakṣīnāmnā sadoditā //* – “To exist in this [supreme  
state, i.e. Tārikā] the knowers of the truth enter *brahman*, consisting of me. She  
(Tārikā) is discerned in all Śāstras by the foremost among the learned. Verily,  
this world of word and referent is interwoven in her. It is always by means of her  
that I, the eternal one, am analytically reflected upon by the Sām̐khyas. It is by  
means of meditating on her that I am meditated upon by those who are absorbed  
in meditation. It is via her that I am named as the ultimate among the 36  
[principles, *tattva*] by the Śaivas. Similarly, when the Saura maṇḍala in the  
collection Ṛc, Yajus and Sāman is reflected upon, it is via her that I am the great  
queen, the supreme Trayī. It is via her that those who are versed in Lokāyata  
discern [me] as a young woman possessing great wealth and endowed with great  
beauty. [It is via her that I] am meditated upon as [pure] contentless thought by

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*brahma niṣṭhā san brahmavedinām /* – “With multiple names one worships him, the immutable, O  
chief among Brahmins – as Īśvara and as Puruṣa, as both Śiva and Sūrya, and also as Soma. And  
again, as both Agni and Soma, and also as the Word. And as Knowledge, Light and Time, O Nārada,  
and also as Jīva and Kṣetra, and as the Self of [all] beings. Thus the single supreme god has a form  
that consists of manifold powers. Nārāyaṇa, the supreme *brahman*, is the goal (*niṣṭhā*) of those who  
know the true *brahman*.”

those [Buddhists] who are learned in the rule of momentariness. And assuredly, it is via her that I am proclaimed with the name Yakṣī by the [Jain] Ārhatas.” (LT 25.39-44)

While these passages may be cited as good examples of “inclusivism” in Paul Hacker’s sense of the term,<sup>278</sup> they cannot be said to be genuinely syncretistic. However, elsewhere in the AS and the LT, we do encounter genuine attempts to appropriate and integrate the four traditions (Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāśupata) listed alongside the Pāñcarātra in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. As we have seen in previous chapters, it is not unusual for Pāñcarātra scriptures to incorporate Vedic rites and mantras into their own rituals, as the AS and the LT do, as has been noted above. The AS’s (15.26ff) orthodox account of the four social classes (*varṇa*) and stages of life (*āśrama*) is not particularly striking either, for much the same reason. Nor is its decree that the initiate (*śiṣya*) must be a member of the twice-born classes (AS 20.8d), or the LT’s (21.30d) assertion that the preceptor (*ācārya*) should be a Brahmin who is “thoroughly learned in the Veda” (*vedapāragah*), though such restrictions may well support the argument that neither of these works are as old as was previously held. However, what is more striking is that both of these texts also openly appropriate, integrate and legitimate ideas and nomenclature from Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Śaiva sources.

Thus, the AS’s seventh chapter on the “impure creation” (*śuddhetarasṛṣṭi*) begins by acknowledging its reliance on the evolutionary scheme propounded by the Sāṃkhyas.<sup>279</sup> In the same work, ‘Yoga’ is presented as commensurate with the “internal worship” or “sacrifice in the heart” (*hr̥dyāga*, *hr̥dayārādhana*, AS 31.2ff) that we find described in other Saṃhitās. Here, in contrast to the act of “advancing” or “engaging” (*pravartakakarman*), which is said to lead to fruits such as heaven (*svargādīphala*), Yoga or internal worship is called *nivartakakarman*, the act of “turning away” or “disengaging”, and is said to lead to liberation (*mokṣa*) (AS 31.13-

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<sup>278</sup> For Hacker (1995: 244), “inclusivism” consists “in claiming for, and thus including in, one’s own religion what really belongs to an alien sect”. Halbfass (1995: 11) further characterises Hacker’s notion of inclusivism as “a subordinating identification of other teachings with parts or preliminary stages of one’s own religious system, which is thus presented as a superior structure”.

<sup>279</sup> AS 7.1: *anyūnānatiriktaṃ yad guṇasāmyaṃ tamomayaṃ / tat sām̐khyair jagato mūlaṃ prakṛtiś ceti kathyate ||*.



14). The eight limbs (*aṣṭāṅga*) of Yoga, by which the individual self (*jīvātman*) achieves conjunction (*saṁyoga*) with the supreme self (*paramātman*) (AS 31.15), are then described in detail (AS 31.18-32.76). These are the same eight limbs we find enumerated in the *Yogasūtra*, though the descriptions of each one differ here. At the end of the AS, the author claims to have “reflected thoroughly on the methods of Sāṁkhya and Yoga”.<sup>280</sup> The LT, meanwhile, adopts a similar position with regard to these traditions, and frequently legitimates both as effective soteriological methods alongside the Pāñcarātra and the Veda (e.g. LT 13.12-13b, 15.17, 17.9-13, 32.17).

Alexis Sanderson (2001: 35-38) has shown that both the AS and the LT also incorporate ideas and terminology from North Indian Śaiva scriptural sources. I do not need to repeat Sanderson’s findings here, or to list the substantial text-parallels he has found between the LT and several Kashmirian works. It is worth emphasising, however, that these processes of appropriation and inclusion are deliberately *open* in these works. For example, in the AS (14.14-20) we are told that at the beginning of creation, Viṣṇu’s discus-form Sudarśana manifests as five powers (*śakti*), one of which, namely the power of concealment (*tirodhāna*), causes the embodied selves (*jīva*) to be tainted by “three impurities” (*malatrayam*). As Schrader (1916: 115) has observed, these “three impurities” are not the same as those presented in a number of Śaiva scriptures, rather they bear a close resemblance to three of the five so-called “sheaths” (*kañcuka*) which are listed in several works of the Śaiva Mantramārga. However, it is notable that at AS 11.45ab the five powers (*śaktipañcaka*) and the three impurities (*malatraya*) are named together as doctrines of the Pāśupata.<sup>281</sup> Elsewhere, at the end of the presentation of the five teachings which have evolved out of the original teaching (*ādiśāstra*), it is said that Sudarśana, having divided himself into five, has “five faces” (*pañcavaktragaḥ*).<sup>282</sup> This is a very common epithet of Śiva. Though it is also applied to Viṣṇu elsewhere in the Pāñcarātra

<sup>280</sup> AS 60.17ab: *sāṁkhyayogavidhir yatra kārtsnyena paricintyate* /. Cf. the final *śloka* of the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh 12.339.21), in which Brahmā claims to have answered the preceding questions in conformity with Sāṁkhya and Yoga: *etat te kathitaṁ putra yathāvad anupṛcchataḥ* / *sāṁkhyajñāne tathā yoge yathāvad anuvarṇitam* //.

<sup>281</sup> The association of the doctrine of the “three impurities” with the Pāśupata is also made at AS 55.13-14.

<sup>282</sup> AS 11.64c-65b: *sudarśanāhvayo yo ’sau saṁkalpo vaiṣṇavaḥ paraḥ* // *sa svayaṁ bibhīde tena pañcadhā pañcavaktragaḥ* /.

literature, in these texts god is more frequently characterised as having *four* faces, corresponding to his four Vyūha forms. In another passage, the highest principles of the Pāśupata doctrine, as well as those of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, are said to be denoted by the *praṇava om*, which refers at the same time to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (AS 51.39-42).

The AS, moreover, explicitly adverts to its syncretist agenda. In its opening chapter, the text describes itself as “a union of the different Siddhāntas embellished with the various [branches of] knowledge” (*nānāsiddhāntasambhedā nānāvidyopāśobhitā*, AS 1.70ab). The term *siddhānta* is used in the AS to designate not the separate traditions *within* the Pāñcarātra, on which this text says nothing, but rather the five traditions which are founded in the original teaching (*ādiśāstra*). At AS 15.6cd it is claimed that these five Siddhāntas are “highly esteemed by everyone” (*sarvasaṃmatāḥ*). In the preceding chapter, the paths (*mārga*) by which “the abode of Viṣṇu” (*sthānaṃ vaiṣṇavam*) can be reached include Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and the observance of “terrible austerities” (*ugravratadharah*), which I take to mean the Pāśupata.<sup>283</sup> These paths may be followed both on their own and conjointly (*saṃhatair vigṛhītaiś ca*) (AS 14.39-40). In its closing chapters, meanwhile, the AS describes itself as a “compendium” (*saṃhitā*), “immersed in the various Śāstras” (*nānāśāstrāvagāhinī*, AS 59.69cd), “consisting of Sāṃkhya and Yoga etc.” (*sāṃkhyayogādisaṃmitā*, AS 59.70b), and as “the essence of the Tantras” (*tantrasāra*, AS 60.20cd).

Such pronouncements should not obscure the fact that the AS presents the Pāñcarātra as being superior to the other four Śāstras. It speaks in one passage, for instance, of the possibility of the followers of the Vedas and Sāṃkhya etc. “ascending” (*ārohani*), if they desire it, to the Sāttvata teaching (AS 15.21c-22b). In another passage, the Vedas, Sāṃkhya and Pāśupata are described as providing “mediate” (*vyavadhānataḥ*, AS 13.17b) or “indirect” (*parokṣam*, AS 13.25c) knowledge (of god, and of the means to *mokṣa*), and this is contrasted with the “direct” (*sākṣāt*) knowledge provided by the Pāñcarātra (AS 13.21c-22). And it is the Pāñcarātra Śāstra alone among the five systems of knowledge that is said to contain

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<sup>283</sup> In the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh 12.328.18c) Rudra is called *ugravratadharah*.

the essence (*sāra*) of the original teaching (AS 11.62c-63b). However, on the cosmological plane the five teachings are situated at the same level, for they are the manifestations of “the word” (*śabda*), which in this text is presented, as Schrader (1916: 107-108) notes, as one of Sudarśana’s “regulative powers” (*pramāṇa*) (see e.g. AS 11.2), i.e. the means by which the periods between cosmic creation and dissolution are structured and maintained. In this context the AS calls the five teachings the “primordial elements” (*etāni pañca śāstrāṇi mūlabhūtāni*) which, by Viṣṇu’s will (*saṃkalpa*), are separated from each other in every Cosmic Age (*yuga*) (AS 12.49).

The LT does not present itself as a compendium of other Śāstras, or as encompassing the teachings of Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Pāśupata in the consistent manner of the AS. Nonetheless, in addition to the verses quoted above wherein Lakṣmī is presented as the “goal” (*niṣṭhā*) of the five traditions (LT 1.41c-43b), we also find it said of “the yogin who is intent upon meditating on Tārikā”, that he is “eagerly engaged in the [Vedic] rites, he is a Sāṃkhya, a Yogin, a Sāttvata and a Pāśupata.”<sup>284</sup> And at the very end of the LT, it is determined that the one who is fit to receive the teaching must, among other accomplishments, know the method of Yoga together with its limbs (*sāṅgayogavidhāna*), the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, and the doctrine of Paśupati (LT 57.52c-53b).

Like the AS, the LT draws on the non-dual philosophy of Kashmirian Śaiva traditions, wherein “reality” is viewed as nothing but the unbounded, dynamic consciousness of Śiva. The AS and the LT’s markedly tolerant and inclusive approach to other religious systems can be seen in many ways as the inevitable consequence of such a philosophy, for all teachings must be admitted as ultimately deriving from the same source.<sup>285</sup> Thus, the nominal inclusion, as we have seen, of even Buddhist, Jain and Cārvaka or Lokāyata traditions, and the LT’s claim, when speaking of Śāstra, that “the supreme good is accessible everywhere”:

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<sup>284</sup> LT 40.118-119a: *evam yo vartate yogī tārikāmananodyataḥ / sa karmaṭhaḥ sa vai sāmṃkhyāḥ sa yogī sa ca sāttvataḥ // sa ca pāśupato jñeyaḥ... //*

<sup>285</sup> Non-Saiddhāntika Śaiva philosophers such as Abhinavagupta avoided the potential relativism of the claim that all Śāstras are valid because they are all manifestations of Śiva’s consciousness by employing a variety of arguments which attempted to justify the ordering of God’s revelation into a hierarchy (see e.g. Hanneder 1998). There is no such systematic presentation in the AS or the LT.

*divyaśāstrāṇy adhīyita nigamāṃś caiva vaidikān / sarvān anucaret samyak  
siddhāntān ātmasiddhaye // alolupena cittena rāgadveṣavivarjitaḥ / na ninden  
manasā vācā śāstrāṇy uccāvacāny api // tāvan mātrārtham ādadyād yāvatā hy  
artha ātmanaḥ / bhūtānāṃ śreyase sarve sarvaśāstrāṇi tanvate // ... / ... //*  
*śrīmān nārāyaṇaḥ prokto vidhayaiva tayā tayā / ahaṃ nārāyaṇasthāpi  
sarvajñā sarvadarśinī // nidānajñā bhiṣakkalpā tattad gurvādirūpiṇī /  
pravartayāmi śāstrāṇi tāni tāni tathā tathā // adhikārānurūpena pramāṇāni  
tathā tathā / atyantaheyaṃ na kvāpi śāstraṃ kiṃcana vidyate // sarvatra  
sulabhaṃ śreyaḥ svalpaṃ vā yadi vā bahu / tataḥ kāryo na vidveṣo yāvad  
artham upāśrayet //* – “He (the adept) should study the celestial scriptures and  
the Vedic texts (*nigama*). He must follow all Siddhāntas perfectly in order to  
attain *ātman*. [This means] being free from attachment and aversion, and with  
his mind free from desire. He should neither mentally nor verbally condemn the  
Śāstras, whether high or low, [and] he should accept their content entirely  
insofar as it is related to *ātman*. All Śāstras are deployed (*tanvate*) for the benefit  
of living beings... The venerable Nārāyaṇa is described [in them] in many  
different ways. Abiding in Nārāyaṇa, I am all-seeing and all-knowing,  
resembling a physician who knows the cause of diseases. Embodying this and  
that particular guru etc., I assuredly divulge the various different Śāstras [each of  
which] is a source of knowledge that is adapted to [one’s own particular]  
capacity. [Therefore] no Śāstra should ever be rejected completely. Whether it  
be abundant or scarce, the supreme good is accessible everywhere. Therefore,  
insofar as one must take refuge in [one] teaching (*artha*), there should no  
contempt [for another teaching].” (LT 28.29-31, 33-36)

Although the AS and the LT are both very probably South Indian in origin,  
when formulating their understanding of Śāstra and locating their own texts within  
that compass, the authors of these works looked to the non-dualism of Kashmirian  
Śaiva philosophers rather than to the “differentiated non-dualism” of Rāmānuja and  
his Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. This is despite the fact that both works elsewhere show the  
influence of the latter (see especially AS 37.22-35b, as noted by Rastelli 2004, and  
LT 16.42-44, 17.38-64, 28.9-16). Indeed it is striking, and hardly coincidental, that  
these texts’ only references to the soteriological *ineffectiveness* of Sāṃkhya and  
Yoga occur among the passages just cited (i.e. AS 37.25-26, LT 17.49-50, 63) – in  
other words, alongside expressions of devotion which appear to bear the influence of  
Śrīvaiṣṇava thought.

Where, then, can we locate the syncretistic AS and LT within the textual  
history of the Pāñcarātra? Both works clearly borrow from the *Nārāyaṇīya* the device  
of integrating the four traditions Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Pāśupata within a

Pāñcarātra framework. However, it is also evident that a syncretistic Pāñcarātra tradition existed in Kashmir before the composition of the AS and the LT, for it is represented there in the c. tenth century *Spandapradīpikā* (SpPr) of Bhagavadutpala. Like the AS and the LT, this work draws heavily on non-dual Śaiva philosophy, quoting profusely from Śaiva scriptural and post-scriptural works, as well as, for example, from Vāmanadatta's *Samvitprakāśa*,<sup>286</sup> several Pāñcarātra scriptures, the Upaniṣads, Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, Bhartṛhari, Nāgārjuna, Dignāga, and other unnamed Buddhist sources.<sup>287</sup> Of more relevance, at least with regard to the AS, we find the five traditions of the *Nārāyaṇīya* listed together in another work composed in Kashmir, or in "the sphere of Kashmir's cultural influence" (Sanderson 2009a: 105), towards the end of the first millennium, namely the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VDhP). In this work, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, the Pāñcarātra, the Vedas and the Pāśupata are listed together as the five "doctrines" (*kṛtānta*)<sup>288</sup> alongside, in one case fourteen (VDhP 1.74.32-35b), and in another case eighteen (VDhP 2.22.128-134b), traditional branches of knowledge (*vidyā*). In the verse following the first passage, the VDhP asserts that "the Dharmas of Viṣṇu (i.e. the *Viṣṇudharmāḥ*), together with their additions, have proclaimed this (i.e. the VDhP) to be the essence (i.e. of the fourteen branches of knowledge and the five doctrines)" (*sottarā vaiṣṇavā dharmās sāram etat prakīrtitam*, VDhP 1.74.35cd). In other words, the VDhP, like the AS, presents itself here as the summation of the entire available breadth of "authentic" knowledge, and this consists of the traditional branches of learning (*vidyā*, or elsewhere *vidyāsthāna*) together with Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra and Pāśupata. The AS (1.70ab), recall, claims to be a "union" of these teachings.

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<sup>286</sup> Numerous passages from this work are also incorporated into the LT (see Sanderson 2001: 36 n. 46).

<sup>287</sup> The SpPr, the printed edition of which runs only to 58 pages, quotes directly from other texts 222 times, with over 40 different works cited. Bhagavadutpala states in the introductory section that the philosophical viewpoint (*darśana*) of the *Spandakārikā*, on which he is commenting, is non-dual (*advaita*). This viewpoint is "its own system" (*idaṃ darśanam svatantram*), writes Bhagavadutpala, and all Śāstras which teach non-dualism conform with it (*sarvaśāstrasamudbhūtaṃ cādvaitapratipādatvaṃ nirbādham eva*, SpPr 6.10-11).

<sup>288</sup> See Yāmuna's, Rāmānuja's, and Vedāntadeśika's quotation of MBh 12.326.100cd at, respectively, ĀP 107.1-2, *Śrībhāṣya* 333.8-9, and PRR 2.8-10: *idaṃ mahopaniṣadaṃ caturvedasamanvitam / sāmṃkhyayogakṛtāntena pañcarātrānuśabdītam //*. MBh 12.326.100cd reads: *sāmṃkhyayogakṛtāṃ tena pañcarātrānuśabdītam //*.

In the second *khaṇḍa* of the VDhP, four subsidiary Vedas – Itihāsa (narratives which tell of “the way things were”), Dhanurveda (weaponry), Gandharva (music, dance and drama), and Āyurveda (medicine) – are added to the list of the fourteen *vidyās* (i.e. the four Vedas and six Vedāṅgas, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, Dharmaśāstra and Purāṇa), and named alongside the five “doctrines”.<sup>289</sup> The same verses are contained in the *Agnipurāṇa* (219.57c-61), and their content is reflected in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the AS, wherein the chief fields of enquiry and application of the five systems Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra, and Pāśupata are enumerated, and the Veda is shown to consist of 21 subdivisions (*bheda*). Here (at AS 12.6c-16), the disciplines of architecture, planning and construction (*vāstu*), governance (*daṇḍanīti*), and agriculture and commerce (*vārtā*, though normally *vārttā*) are added to the eighteen branches of knowledge named in the second *khaṇḍa* of the VDhP.<sup>290</sup> The listing in the VDhP of the traditional branches of knowledge alongside the five systems named together in the *Nārāyaṇīya* may well be sufficiently broad in its scope to qualify as a relatively early formulation of the disciplines and traditions which would later collectively be called “Hinduism”. Although the AS’s syncretistic world-view, aiming to incorporate and encapsulate all traditions of “authentic knowledge”, is rare among the scriptural works of the Pāñcarātra, it is not unprecedented in Vaiṣṇava literature.

<sup>289</sup> VDhP 2.22.128-134b: *mahendro malayaḥ sahyāḥ śuktimān ṛkṣavāṃs tathā / vindhyaś ca pāriyātraś ca sarva eva mahīdharāḥ // samāgamyābhiṣiñcantu tvām adya vasudhādhipa / ṛgvedo’tha yajurvedaḥ sāmavedas tathaiva ca // atharvavedo vedās tvām abhiṣiñcantu pāṛthiva / itihāso dhanurvedo gandharvaś cāyussaṃjñītaḥ // vedopavedās ca tathā vijayāya bhavantu te / śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṃ niruktaṃ jyotiṣāṅgatiḥ // chandovicitiṣaṣṭhāni vijayāḥ pradiśantu te / aṅgāni vedās catvāro mīmāṃsā nyāyavistaraḥ // dharmaśāstraṃ purāṇaṃ ca vidyā etās caturdaśa / sāmkhya yogaḥ pañcarātraṃ vedāḥ pāśupataṃ tathā // kṛtāntapañcakam [corr. kṛtānnapañcakam] hy etac chāstrāṇi vividhāni ca /*

<sup>290</sup> According to Krishnamacharya (1986: 106), the editor of the revised edition of the AS, verses 15-16 are omitted in one manuscript. In these verses *vāsturveda*, *dhanurveda*, *gāndharva* and *āyurveda* are listed as four of the five Upavedas, and it is claimed that there are 21 divisions in total. These verses may be a later interpolation, and they pose something of a problem in that if there are indeed five Upavedas, then Itihāsa and Purāṇa (at 14a) must count together as one, but if this is the case then the AS only enumerates 20 divisions as opposed to 21. It is possible that a re-worker may have identified *arthāḥ* at AS 12.13a as referring to the *Arthaśāstra*.

#### *iv.) Conclusions*

It is not easy to locate the AS and the LT in relation to the other published Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. There are several clues, as Begley and Sanderson have shown, that both are South Indian in origin, but excepting their prescriptions for the recitation of Vedic and Pāñcarātriaka mantras and, in the case of the AS especially, their pronounced leanings towards Brahminical orthodoxy, they are different in many respects to the South Indian scriptural works which I have addressed in previous chapters. Other than a clearly interpolated section of the LT (41.67-68), neither text gives any indication of the Pāñcarātriaka sectarianism which appears to have dominated certain South Indian contexts in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. This may suggest that both works predate this period of sectarian hostility, or that they are products of an area which was not affected by it. It is notable that, in contrast to the majority of South Indian Saṃhitās at my disposal (e.g. the SanS, ViṣS, PādS, NārS, PārS, ĪS, and ViṣṇuS), neither the AS nor the LT make any reference to the Vaikhānasa tradition.

It may be tentatively proposed that both were composed in urban, cosmopolitan centres where the Pāñcarātra had some prominence. As mentioned above, many chapters of the AS are directly addressed to prospective royal patrons. The fact that neither work is particularly concerned with the details of temple ritual may indicate that other Pāñcarātra texts were in use alongside them. Interestingly, both have incorporated material and ideas from Kashmirian Śaiva sources (Sanderson 2001: 35-38) and in their metaphysical positions and their attitudes towards other teachings, appear to have been substantially influenced by Kashmirian literature.

The idea of the compatibility of the five teachings Pāñcarātra, Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Pāśupata is clearly incorporated from the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Like that text, both works aim to include, and thereby subordinate, the four latter teachings within a comprehensive Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. However, it is notable that the AS and the LT go, as it were, one step further than the *Nārāyaṇīya* in that they genuinely integrate Śaiva ideas into their syncretistic world-view.

The AS's presentation of the five teachings can, I believe, be interpreted as a conscious attempt to renew the integrative project undertaken by the authors of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and to bring that project up to date. Hence, its descriptions of the five teachings do not rely on the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s reports of what were then apparently relatively loosely coordinated traditions. Rather, "Epic" Sāṃkhya and Yoga are replaced by the "Classical" systems, so that 'Sāṃkhya', for instance, is represented by the *Saṣṭitantra* (AS 12.18-31b), the lost, apparently systematic philosophical text (see Schrader 1916: 110-111) of which the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (72) claims to be a summary. 'Yoga' is Pātañjala Yoga (AS 31.18-32.76). Ideas associated with 'Pāśupata', as I have mentioned above, actually belong to the, by this time, more prominent Śaiva Siddhānta. 'Veda' now incorporates 21 branches of knowledge (*vidyā*).

What, then, of 'Pāñcarātra' itself? Does the AS present a "Classical" model of this system, a comprehensive synthesis and summary of its diverse teachings, practices and religious identities? This is rather difficult to answer, since from our perspective, based on the available evidence in the other Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, it most certainly does not. However, the AS does consistently present the Pāñcarātra as a single "system" (*tantra*) or "law" (*dharma*), and it also contains a short, systematic and rather esoteric summary (*saṃkṣepa*) of the Pāñcarātra, distinguishing between ten "collections [of teachings]" (*saṃhitā*). These are listed as follows: God (*bhagavat*), ritual (*karma*), knowledge (*vidyā*), time (*kāla*), duty (*kartavya*), special rites (*vaiśeṣikī kriyā*), restraining the mind and sense-faculties (*saṃyama*), contemplation (*cintā*), the "path" (*mārga*), and liberation (*mokṣa*) (AS 12.45-48). This is hardly a comprehensive "summary" of the Pāñcarātra tradition that is available to us through its scriptural literature. It is, though, comprehensive in another sense: it is general enough to be able to incorporate the methods of Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Pāśupata, and this is no doubt the author's intention. For although "time" could probably be interpreted by the AS's audience, if necessary, as referring to the Pāñcarātra teaching of the "five times" (as it is by Schrader), there is no terminology here which is peculiar to the Pāñcarātra. Unsurprisingly, we do not find similar summaries of the Pāñcarātra elsewhere in the scriptural works. Indeed,



the apparent originality of this presentation raises the question of the Pāñcarātra's identity in the period and place of the AS's composition. For the fact that its authors were free to present the Pāñcarātra in this way suggests that the identity of this tradition was, in that period and place, open to revision and reinvention.

## PART THREE

### MERGING IDENTITIES: INTEGRATING TRADITIONS

#### *Introduction*

At the end of the last chapter I suggested that, in the minds of the authors of the AS, the identity of the Pāñcarātra tradition was “open to revision and reinvention”. In the previous two chapters, I discussed similar processes of adaptation and innovation in the form of the “Vedification” of the Pāñcarātra, and the invention of the Ekāyanaveda. In each case I have focussed on these developments as they occurred in South India in the early centuries of the second millennium, undoubtedly a period of great growth and productivity for these traditions. However, as we have seen, the desire of Pāñcarātrikas to align themselves with the Veda, and the appeal to the *Nārāyaṇīya* as a legitimating source for the establishment of a universal Vaiṣṇava religion, are evident already in North Indian literature of the preceding centuries. In each of the cases I have addressed in Part Two, Pāñcarātrika authors have attempted to construct or to reconstruct the identity of their own textual tradition by extending its canonical boundaries. Each of these attempts seeks legitimacy through identification with another textual tradition. Of the different authorities appealed to by Pāñcarātrikas, however, only the *Nārāyaṇīya* is innately responsive.

It is impossible to speak of the identity of the Pāñcarātra “tradition” without addressing the *Nārāyaṇīya*. What is the origin of ‘Pāñcarātra’ as a distinct religious identity? I undertake to answer this question in Chapter Seven, by focussing on the ‘Ekāntins’, the *Nārāyaṇīya*’s protagonists. The construction of a ‘Pāñcarātra’ identity in this text is dependent, I will argue, on the appropriation and synthesis of other religious identities. In South India between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, as I show in Chapter Eight, the Ekāntins came to be identified with one particular Pāñcarātra tradition. As this tradition adapted to a religious environment increasingly dominated

by the priestly performance of temple rituals for fee-paying clients, so the identity of these Ekāntins underwent significant changes. These developments bring us back to the theme we left behind in Chapter Three, namely the integration of distinct Pāñcarātrika identities, and the consequent formation of the Pāñcarātra canon. In Chapter Nine, I argue that we are now in a better position to attempt to explain the decline of the sectarian culture which dominated certain South Indian Pāñcarātra contexts, and the merging of identities which succeeded it.

## 7. The *Ekāntins* in the *Nārāyaṇīya*

### i.) *Setting the scene*

As we have seen above, and will see again below, the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh 12.321-339) has played a crucial role in the self-understanding of later Pāñcarātra traditions. Within the last fifteen years or so, scholarship on this text has been dominated by the German language volume *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien* (1997), the outcome of a collaborative project undertaken by Reinhold Grünendahl, Angelika Malinar, Thomas Oberlies and Peter Schreiner. The contributions of these scholars are briefly summarised in an English language introduction to the volume by Schreiner (1997a), who writes near the beginning (*ibid*: 1):

Even the most cursory survey of the whole *Nārāyaṇīya* reveals that the text is divided into two parts (part A and part B, in our terminology). Part A comprises chapters 321-326 and is a complex sequence of emboxed narratives. Part B is a sequence of separate units only loosely connected. Redactional devices like the change of dialogue setting and cross references suggest that part B is later than part A... [As] a whole the text cannot have taken shape long before the final redaction of the Mahābhārata, i.e. before the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The contributions of Oberlies (1997, 1997a, 1997b) to this volume identify the “emboxed narratives” which comprise the first six chapters as distinct textual units or “layers”, the composition of which can be arranged chronologically. The basic framework (*Grundgerüst*) of part A concerns Nārada’s journey to White Island (*śvetadvīpa*), his recitation of a *stotra*, and his subsequent vision of, and short conversation with, Nārāyaṇa. To this core narrative, other loosely connected tales and dialogues were subsequently added (Oberlies 1997: 87). Meanwhile, the lack of homogeneity in the following chapters (12.327-339), redacted after the completion of part A, and collectively referred to as part B, is demonstrated in one place or another in the essays of Grünendahl, Malinar and Schreiner.

This general picture of the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s heterogeneous composition has been subject to detailed criticism and rejection by Hiltebeitel (2006), who holds that the composition of the MBh as a whole occurred within “at most two generations sometime between 150 BCE and the year zero” (ibid: 227).<sup>291</sup> I am not competent to enter into the debate, not least because I am not working from manuscript sources. However, on the basis that any scholar now working on the *Nārāyaṇīya* is obliged, at least implicitly, to “take sides”, as it were, in the following I shall *explicitly* accept the general conclusions relating to the text's composition which are contained in *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien*. Accordingly, I adopt that work's principal hermeneutical policy of separating chapters 321-326, henceforth “Part A”, from chapters 327-339, “Part B”. This approach to the text is preferable to Hiltebeitel's, to my mind, because it can much more easily explain the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s numerous discontinuities, inconsistencies and contradictions, and its generally disjointed narrative. I am fundamentally in agreement with Schreiner's (1997a: 15) description of the *Nārāyaṇīya* as a “puzzling labyrinth”, and some of these inconsistencies etc. will be addressed below.

Among the multiple characters, place names, themes and technical vocabularies which later Pāñcarātra authors appear to have borrowed from the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the vision of the idealised, prototypical Ekāntin worshippers has been one of the more persistent. But who are the Ekāntins in the *Nārāyaṇīya*? In his commentary on the MBh, called *Bhāratabhāvadīpa* (BhBhD), the seventeenth century Sanskrit scholar Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara identified the Ekāntins as “devotees without desires” (*niṣkāma bhaktāḥ*).<sup>292</sup> While this characterisation cannot be said to be inaccurate, as I will demonstrate below, it is certainly insufficient. Ekāntins are described and referred to in both parts of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and a close analysis of the relevant passages reveals the emergence of a number of new ideas in the later portions of Part A, and in Part B. These concern both the practice of the Ekāntins, and the means by which they are distinguished from other worshippers. In Part B especially, the

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<sup>291</sup> Hiltebeitel's general position on the composition of the MBh has itself been subject to criticism by Fitzgerald (2003) among others.

<sup>292</sup> BhBhD on MBh 12.336.3cd. In the “Bombay edition”, from which Nīlakaṇṭha was working, this verse is found at 12.348.3cd.

Ekāntins are often described in purely abstract terms, as the perfect human beings. As Vaiśampāyana says to Janamejaya: “Persons that are Ekāntins are very rare, O King. If the world were filled with Ekāntins, O son of the Kurus, [who are] non-violent, know the Self, are intent upon the welfare of all beings, are free from actions motivated by desire, the Kṛta Age would be reached [again]!”<sup>293</sup> However, the term *ekāntin* is also applied to particular persons, for example to the seer (ṛṣi) Nārada, whose story comprises the oldest text layer of Part A, and who is a prominent character in several chapters in Part B. Also present in both parts of the text are the fantastical “White Men”, the paradigmatic Ekāntins who inhabit White Island:

*kṣīrodadher uttarataḥ śvetadvīpo mahāprabhaḥ // tatra nārāyaṇaparā mānavās candravarcasaḥ / ekāntabhāvopagatās te bhaktāḥ puruṣottamam // te sahasrārçiṣaṃ devaṃ praviśanti sanātanam / atīndriyā nirāhārā aniṣpandāḥ sugandhinaḥ // ekāntinas te puruṣāḥ śvetadvīpanivāsinaḥ /* - “North of the Milk Ocean, shining brilliantly, is White Island. The people there, devoted to Nārāyaṇa, are the colour of the moon. Those devotees of the Supreme Person have attained the state of *ekānta*. They enter the eternal, thousand-rayed god. [Existing in a state in which] the sense faculties are transcended, without [the need for] food, motionless, sweet-smelling, those persons who live on White Island are Ekāntins.” (MBh 12.323.23c-26b)

In the simplest terms, as expressed here and elsewhere (e.g. 337.67), Ekāntins are those who have attained the state of *ekānta* (*ekāntabhāva*). This is sometimes identified as a mental state (*ekāntagatabuddhi*, 326.96, 331.50). At 326.96 this mental state is declared to be a prerequisite for attaining a vision of god. The various descriptions and implications of the state of *ekānta* are the focus of my attention in the following part of this chapter, where I scrutinise the term *ekānta* itself. Thereafter, I address the “religious identity” of the Ekāntins, paying particular attention to the ways in which they are distinguished from other worshippers.

<sup>293</sup> MBh 12.336.57e-58: *ekāntino hi puruṣā durlabhā bahavo nṛpa /// yady ekāntibhir ākīrṇaṃ jagat syāt kurunandana / ahimsakair ātmavidbhiḥ sarvabhūtahite rataiḥ // bhavet kṛtayugaprāptir āśīḥkarmavivarjitaiḥ ///*

In the context of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, several modern scholars (e.g. Bhandarkar 1913: 6, Gonda 1977: 9, Matsubara 1994: 51ff) have understood the terms *ekānta* and *ekāntin* to denote primarily “monotheism”. However, although the exclusive worship of Hari-Nārāyaṇa, also called Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva, certainly appears to be one of the key meanings of *ekānta* and its related terms in several passages belonging to *Part B*, there is little justification for the claim that this is the primary sense of these terms throughout the *Nārāyaṇīya* as a whole. In the following I will argue that, as used in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the terms *ekānta* etc. are multivalent, and that the text itself quite explicitly invites this interpretation. It is worth noting here that I am in agreement on this issue, at least in principle, with Vedāntadeśika, who himself stressed the multiple meanings of the term *ekāntin*.<sup>294</sup> In sorting through the various, and concurrent, senses of *ekānta* and its related terms in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, I will draw attention to three in particular, and argue that each of these can be more significant to a preliminary understanding of the identity of the Ekāntins than is the characteristic of monotheism. Only in certain portions of Part B, moreover, does “monotheism” (i.e. the worship of a Vaiṣṇava deity to the exclusion of other deities, Brahmā and Śiva in particular) appear to supplant one of the three senses that I call attention to.

It should be stated at the outset that I am not the first to question the validity of interpreting *ekānta* etc. in the *Nārāyaṇīya* as referring primarily to “monotheism”. Already in the middle of the nineteenth century, in his monumental *Indische Alterthumskunde* the Norwegian scholar Christian Lassen, a former student and colleague of August Wilhelm von Schlegel at the University of Bonn, rendered *ekāntagatabuddhi* (used to describe Nārada at MBh 12.326.96d) as “seinen Geist auf einen gewissen Gegenstand gerichtet hatte”, asserting in a footnote that the literal meaning of *ekānta* is “was einem einzigen Ausgang hat, also was sicher ist.” Lassen (1852: 1104 n. 5) concluded that *ekāntin* does not therefore mean “monotheist” (“Ekāntin bedeutet demnach nicht eigentlich Monotheist”). While I do not share

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<sup>294</sup> PRR 139.4ff: *ekatra anto niścayaḥ prāpyatayā prāpakatayā ca... tatrāpy ananyopāyātṛvānanyaprayojanatvayoḥ samuccayāt pāramyam / ananyapāyātṛvāṃ ca ananyadevatākatvaparyantam.*

Lassen's belief that we can do away with the sense of monotheism altogether, this is nonetheless an instructive reading. As with Vedāntadeśika before him, Lassen finds in the term *ekānta* a reference to the means by which a certain goal is attained, and a reference to the nature of the goal itself. The latter, according to Lassen, is both singular and certain.

These represent, in my view, two of the primary senses of *ekānta* in the *Nārāyaṇīya*: the single-minded concentration on a Vaiṣṇava deity (normally called Hari or Nārāyaṇa), and the outcome (i.e. liberation, *mokṣa*) which is certain to ensue from such a practice. In the first of these senses, the term *ekānta* is similar in meaning, as Brockington (2003: 18) has observed, to the term *ekāgra*, which refers to “one-pointed” concentration. The adjectival compound *ekāgra* is used in several places in the MBh as “a general term of commendation” (ibid.), but it also occurs, especially in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, as the name for a technique adopted in meditation. Thus, at MBh 12.188.5, during an explanation of the fourfold “yoga of meditation” (*dhyānayoga*), we read, in the translation of Bronkhorst (1993: 68-69): “A sage, sitting like a piece of wood, bundling his senses together, should fix his mind [so that it becomes] one-pointed and held together as a result of recitation, on that”.<sup>295</sup> Elsewhere, a description of the practice of yoga (*yogakṛtya*) contains a reference to performing “one-pointedness of the mind and senses” (*manasaś cendriyāṇāṃ ca kṛtvaikāgryam*, MBh 12.232.13ab, see also 24c), while at MBh 12.294.8, meditation (*dhyāna*) is said to consist of one-pointedness of the mind (*ekāgratā ca manasaḥ*) and restraint of the breath (*prāṇāyāma*).<sup>296</sup> As well as being explicitly associated with the practice of yoga (see also 12.304.23, and *Bhagavadgītā* 6.12a) and meditation (*dhyāna*, see also 12.198.6), one-pointedness is also linked to

<sup>295</sup> MBh 12.188.5: *tatra svādhyāyasamśliṣṭam ekāgram dhārayen manaḥ / piṇḍikṛtyendriyagrāmam āsīnaḥ kāṣṭhavan muniḥ* // Cf. Wynne (2009: 189), working from the Bombay edition: “In those places, the silent sage should sit as still as a piece of wood and bring his sense faculties together. Then he should keep his mind one-pointed, and steeped in meditation (*tatra dhyānena samśliṣṭam ekāgram dhārayen manaḥ*).” Both Bronkhorst (1993: 70-71) and Wynne (2007: 29) note that the passage containing this verse borrows ideas and nomenclature from Buddhist accounts of the four *dhyānas*.

<sup>296</sup> Ten chapters further on in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (12.304.8-10), the highest practice of yoga (*yogakṛtya*) is said to consist of “fixing the mind” (*dhāraṇā*) and restraining the breath (*prāṇāyāma*). It is likely that “one-pointedness” was understood, at least in some circles, in much the same way as “fixing the mind”. This is confirmed by the star passage \*775 immediately following 12.304.9ab: *ekāgratā ca manasaḥ prāṇāyāmas tathaiva ca* /.



the practice of “recitation” (*svādhyāya* at 12.188.5, *japa* at 12.192.16) and to asceticism (*tapas*, e.g. 3.246.25 and 12.242.4).<sup>297</sup> In the *Nārāyaṇīya*, one-pointedness is also linked with *japa* (12.323.32, 325.2-3) and with *tapas* (327.41), and it is attributed to Nārada as he practises “all austerities” (*sarvakṛcchradharah*, 325.2d) having arrived at White Island. In this latter passage, the description of Nārada shares several features with certain descriptions of the Ekāntin inhabitants of White Island, who also have “one-pointed minds” (*ekāgramanastvena*, 323.32e). Further on, it is said:

*ime hy anindriyāhārā madbhaktāś candravarcaśaḥ / ekāgrāś cintayeyur mām  
naiṣāṃ vighno bhaved iti // siddhāś caite mahābhāgāḥ purā hy ekāntino  
'bhavan / tamorajovinirmuktā mām pravekṣyanty asaṃśayam //* – “These [White Men] are without (i.e. they have transcended) the sense faculties and [the need for] food, are devoted to me, and are the colour of the moon. There should be no interruption for them – they should [be able to] direct their thoughts upon me one-pointedly. These perfected, illustrious beings became Ekāntins long ago. Freed from *rajas* and *tamas*, they will undoubtedly enter into me.” (MBh 12.326.18-19)

Ekāntins are repeatedly characterised by their intense, single-minded concentration.<sup>298</sup> They are focussed on one object only. According to Vedāntadeśika (PRR 139.4), the *anta* in *ekānta* refers to a *niscaya*, a “definite ascertainment”, which is *ekatra*, “in one place”, or in other words, of one particular object. Nīlakaṇṭha, meanwhile, in his commentary on the MBh, glosses *ekāntagatabuddhibhiḥ* (at MBh 12.331.50b) with *avyabhicaritabuddhibhiḥ*, literally “with undeviating minds”. In the opening chapter of the *Nārāyaṇīya* (12.321), the object of this concentrated attention is the inner self (*antarātman*) of all beings, called the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*, 29ab), and Ekāntins are said to be “absorbed in that” (*tadbhāvitā*, 12.321.42ab). Elsewhere, they are described as being absorbed in *brahman* (*brahmabhāva*, 323.45d), and intensely concentrated (*susamāhita*, 326.116). More commonly, the object of their focussed attention is a personal god called Nārāyaṇa or Hari. It is, I

<sup>297</sup> One-pointedness (*ekaggatā/ekāgratā*) also has an important place in Buddhist meditation (see e.g. Cousins 1992) and in Pātañjala yoga (see especially *Yogasūtra* 3.11-12).

<sup>298</sup> The star passage \*813 immediately following 12.323.42ab articulates this well. The two half-*śloka*s 323.42ab-\*813 together read: “By those men who are Ekāntins, knowers of the Five Times, yoked with supreme devotion, Hari is then worshipped in thought, word, and deed” (*tair iṣṭaḥ pañcakālajñair harir ekāntibhir naraiḥ / bhaktyā paramayā yuktair manovākkarmabhis tadā \**).

propose, this intensely concentrated mental attitude which is referred to by the phrase *ekāntabhāva* (at e.g. 322.4d, 323.24c, and 326.116c). Those who have “attained the state of *ekānta*” (*ekāntabhāvopagatā*), we are told at 332.18, have minds that are concentrated and controlled, their senses are restrained, and they enter into Vāsudeva.<sup>299</sup>

This brings me to the second of the three primary senses of *ekānta* and related terms in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. As Lassen notes, the adjective *ekānta* also can also be used to describe something which has only one outcome (“Ausgang”) or “end” (i.e. *anta*). Lassen (1852: 1104 n. 5) remarks that this is the meaning of *ekānta* in the “Sāṃkhya system”, by which he no doubt means the tradition/s which composed, and later commented upon, the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (SK). In this work, the terms *ekānta* (SK 1) and *aikāntika* (SK 68) are found alongside, respectively, *atyanta* and *ātyantika*, the former terms denoting “certainty” and the latter terms “finality” or “permanence” (of the “isolation”, *kaivalya*, of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* at SK 68).<sup>300</sup> The two terms appear to be close enough in meaning in the SK so as to be virtually synonymous (see e.g. Larson 1969: 257, 280; Jacobsen 2002: 6, 275), a semantic feature which is also found, for instance, in the *Bhagavadgītā* (cf. 6.21a, 28d with 14.27d). This use of the word *ekānta* to denote a type of “certainty” echoes the primary sense of *ekānta* and its related terms in the philosophical literature: an argument that is *aikāntika* is one which leads to a single and therefore a certain or definite conclusion, while one which is *anekānta* or *anaikāntika* leads to more than one conclusion, and so is “inconclusive” or “uncertain” (Randle 1930: 192-194). Outside of the philosophical context, *ekānta* can also refer more generally to something which is “absolutely” or “exclusively” the case, and on several occasions in his translation of the first two books of the *Śāntiparvan*, Fitzgerald (2004) translates *ekānta* with these words.<sup>301</sup>

<sup>299</sup> MBh 12.332.18: *samāhitamanaskāś ca niyatāḥ saṃyatendriyāḥ / ekāntabhāvopagatā vāsudevaṃ viśanti te //*.

<sup>300</sup> In his *Bhāṣya* on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, Gauḍapāda (p. 2) glosses *ekānta* with *avaśyam*, meaning “necessarily, inevitably, certainly, at all events, by all means” (Monier-Williams 2002: 104). In his *Vṛtti* on SK 68, the later commentator Māṭhara glosses *aikāntikam* with *avaśyambhāvitvāt*, literally “because of it being necessarily the case”.

<sup>301</sup> See Fitzgerald’s (2004) translations of e.g. MBh 12.13.8a, 19.18a, 81.10a, 128.15a, 137.24c.

In one place in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, we find the term *ekāntitvam* alongside *atyanta*,<sup>302</sup> which may point to the validity of interpreting *ekānta* etc. as denoting, among other things, a kind of “certainty”. The kind of certainty that is applicable to Ekāntins regards their own liberation, which in this text commonly takes the form of entering into god.<sup>303</sup> We are repeatedly told throughout the *Nārāyaṇīya* that Ekāntins, i.e. those who have attained the state of *ekānta*, are assured of entering into god, or of going to the “highest place” etc.<sup>304</sup> On several occasions (e.g. at 12.326.19, translated above, and at 326.44), the liberation of the Ekāntins is referred to in the future tense, suggesting that the state of *ekānta* (*ekāntabhāva*) may represent a stage prior to final liberation. This would explain why the state of *ekānta* is so commonly referred to as something that is “attained”, “arrived at” or “entered into”.<sup>305</sup> And if liberation is guaranteed to those who reach this stage, as is repeatedly stated, this would explain, for example, Nārada’s calling the “White Men” “awakened” (*pratibuddha*, 331.41c, 51b), and Yudhiṣṭhira’s referring to them as being already “liberated here” (*vimuktā bhavantīha*, 322.14a). As Schreiner (1997b: 178) observes, this may be an articulation of the idea that was later called “liberation while living” (*jīvanmukti*). At any rate, it is clear that, for the authors of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, Ekāntins have already undergone a significant transformation of some sort, and that this sets them apart from non-Ekāntins. This transformation is conveyed, metaphorically, by the extraordinary physical appearance of the inhabitants of White Island (described at e.g. 322.9-11) or, as in the following less dramatic example from the *phalaśruti* which closes Part A, by the fact that Ekāntins take on the colour or the “radiance” of the moon:

*yaś cedam paṭhate nityam yaś cedam śṛṇuyān naraḥ / ekāntabhāvopagata  
ekānte susamāhitaḥ // prāpya śvetaṁ mahādvīpaṁ bhūtvā candraprabho naraḥ*

<sup>302</sup> MBh 12.334.1: “Having heard this speech proclaimed by Nara and Nārāyaṇa, Nārada was completely devoted to god, and attained the status of an Ekāntin” (*śrutvaitan nārado vākyam naranārāyaṇeritam / atyantabhaktimān deve ekāntitvam upeyivān //*).

<sup>303</sup> That “entering into god” signifies “liberation” is asserted at 12.326.24ab: *yam praviśya bhavantīha muktā vai dvijasattama /*. See also the very similar 326.41ab, and elsewhere 327.6.

<sup>304</sup> Indeed, mention of the Ekāntins is usually accompanied by this assertion. See e.g. MBh 12.321.41-42; 326.19; 326.44; 332.18; 336.3c-4; 336.69; 337.67.

<sup>305</sup> The most common way to articulate this is with the term *upagata* (see MBh 12.323.24c, 326.116c, 332.18c, and 337.67c). Elsewhere, *samāgata* (323.49b) and *upeyivas* (334.1d) are also used.

*/ sa sahasrārciṣaṃ devaṃ praviśen nātra saṃśayaḥ //* – “A man who regularly recites and listens to this, in a solitary place, intensely concentrated, [by him] the state of *ekānta* is attained. After reaching the great White Island and having become a man with the radiance of the moon (i.e. a “White Man”), he shall undoubtedly enter into the thousand-rayed god.” (MBh 12.326.116-117)

This passage conveniently points to the third of what I am calling the three “primary senses” of *ekānta* while also conveying the two other senses that I have highlighted above. The use of the term *ekānta* to refer to a secluded or solitary place is common throughout the epic (see e.g. MBh 1.21.4c, 3.49.3a, 3.137.5a, 12.215.8d). Frequently, such places are inhabited by renunciates performing acts of asceticism (*tapas*) (e.g. MBh 1.32.4, 1.110.30-35, 1.208.16ff etc.). Indeed, on several occasions in the *Śāntiparvan*, the term *ekāntaśīlin*, literally “practising a life of solitude”, implies precisely the practice of renunciation and *tapas*.<sup>306</sup> In the *Nārāyaṇīya*, shortly after Nārada has listed his personal qualities and achievements (among which he counts *ekāntabhāva*, 12.322.3-4), the vantage point at the summit of Mount Meru from which he first sets eyes on White Island and its Ekāntin inhabitants is described as “secluded” (*ekāntam*, 322.7b). Given the prevalence of this use of *ekānta* in the MBh, and in the *Śāntiparvan* in particular, it seems reasonable to suggest that we should include this sense of the term and its implications in our preliminary understanding of the identity of the Ekāntins in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. After all, Ekāntins are repeatedly described as inhabiting a place (i.e. White Island) which is far removed from the ordinary world. As Nīlakaṇṭha emphasises in his commentary, Ekāntins have renounced all desires (e.g. 328.30, 336.27-29), though they remain desirous of liberation (336.67). They are called ascetics (*yati*, 336.79c), and are

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<sup>306</sup> See MBh 12.9.4-11, where Yudhiṣṭhira describes the life he will live as a forest hermit. The key verses, for the present purposes, are translated by Fitzgerald (2004: 185) as follows: “Abandoning the way of life and the comforts of society, enduring tremendous ascetic observances, I shall live in the forest... Enduring cold, wind, and heat, tolerating hunger, thirst, and fatigue, I shall dry my body up with the heat of the ascetic practices that are prescribed... Living all alone (*ekāntaśīlin*, 10a), reflecting upon matters... I will await the dissolution of this body.” See also 12.23.8-9b (ibid.: 214): “Asceticism, sacrifice, learning, begging alms, the restraint of the senses, meditation, a life of solitude (*ekāntaśīlatva*), contentment, and making donations - all according to one’s ability – these actions are the approved means to complete perfection for brahmins.” Elsewhere, see 12.21.9, 12.288.29, and 12.304.12. With regard to this last verse, it should be noted that Hopkins (1901: 342) and Brockington (2003: 17) interpret *ekāntaśīlinā* as, respectively, “devoted to one thing”, and “devoted to one purpose”. See also MBh 14.19.14-30, wherein *ekāntaśīla* is linked with the teaching or discipline of yoga (*yogaśāstra*).

characterised as having transcended the sense faculties and the need for food (322.9ab, 323.25cd). Nārada, himself an Ekāntin, practises *tapas* or “austerities” (322.3b, 325.2d), and says that his vision of Nārāyaṇa is the “fruit” of these practices, alongside his restraint (*yama*) and piety (*niyama*) (326.15). On two occasions in later passages of Part A, and in several passages belonging to Part B, this renunciate way of life is subsumed under the general category of “disengagement” or withdrawal from activity (*nivṛtti*).<sup>307</sup> At 327.61-66, this practice of *nivṛtti*, literally “turning away” from action, is associated with the traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and with the teaching (*śāstra*) and *dharma* of liberation (*mokṣa*). It is contrasted here with the path of ritual action, namely *pravṛtti*, which is practised by those who “know the Veda”.<sup>308</sup>

Of course, each of the three senses of *ekānta* which I have highlighted here are closely related to one another, and at times their connotations overlap. So, for instance, the first and third senses both point to the practice of asceticism, the first by drawing attention to a meditative technique which was apparently well-established within certain ascetic milieux, the latter by evoking the solitary environments in which such techniques were commonly practised. The first and second senses, meanwhile, could be said to be even closer in that they both ultimately concern Nārāyaṇa: in the first sense as the object of contemplation, and in the second sense as the certain “end” to which this contemplation leads. Needless to say, my reasons for distinguishing *between* senses in the above manner are purely expositional. They do not reflect a strict hermeneutical method, but are merely intended to highlight what I consider to be the most important connotations of the term we are presently occupied with. It should be noted here, before we move on, that the senses of *ekānta* listed above have much in common with those connected to the term *ekāyana*, as discussed in the last chapter.<sup>309</sup>

<sup>307</sup> MBh 12.326.63ab: “It is known that the supreme *nivṛtti* is the extinction of all duties” (*nirvāṇaṃ sarvadharmāṇāṃ nivṛttiḥ paramā smṛtā*).

<sup>308</sup> Hiltebeitel (2011: 254) writes: “Literally, *pravṛtti* means the “act of rolling onwards” or “turning outwards,” implying modes of engagement with the world consonant with dharmashastric norms”. Bailey (1985) offers a thorough discussion of the concepts *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti*.

<sup>309</sup> Among the meanings of *ekānta* given by Monier-Williams (2002: 230) we find “a lonely or retired or secret place”, “the only end or aim”, “devotion to one object”, “directed towards or devoted to only

I have referred above to the prospect of a “preliminary understanding” of the identity of the Ekāntins, which now needs to be explained. Each of the senses of the term *ekānta* to which I have drawn attention can be found in passages which Oberlies (1997, 1997a, 1997b) has identified as belonging to the older portions of Part A. Bearing in mind that the *Nārāyaṇīya* contains multiple “layers”, i.e. sections which have been added to the core narrative (concerning Nārada’s journey to White Island and his vision of god), we should expect to find a number of new ideas and new points of emphasis in these younger sections, and indeed we do. Nārada’s vision of Nārāyaṇa (described at 326.2-9), which belongs to the *oldest* layer of the text, appears to be the consequence of, or the reward for, his singing a hymn of praise (*stotra*) with his mind “one-pointed” (*ekāgramanāḥ*). Nārada has achieved this “one-pointedness” through performing *japa* and austerities alongside the White Men on White Island.<sup>310</sup> In layers of the text added subsequently, the practices of *japa*, asceticism and one-pointedness are, in one place or another, all presented as being central to the Ekāntin worship of god, and the latter is repeatedly declared to be the prerequisite for a *vision* of god. However, in the later additions to Part A, and in Part B, there is increasingly less emphasis on the meditative and ascetic practices referred to above, and a much greater stress on the idea of gratifying god by means of *bhakti*.<sup>311</sup>

Thus, in the story of King Vasu’s *aśvamedha*, Vasu is rewarded with a vision of the Bhagavat not because he is an Ekāntin, but because god is pleased that his sacrifice involved no animal slaughter (323.10-11). At the end of this section, Vasu affirms that it is possible to see god only as a consequence of his kindness (*yasya prasādaṃ kurute sa vai taṃ draṣṭum arhati*, 323.18ef). Meanwhile, one of the main

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one object or person”, and “monotheistic doctrine”. Apte’s (1988: 121) entries, meanwhile, include “solitary”, “directed towards one point or object only”, “a lonely or retired place”, and “exclusive aim”. These are echoed in both dictionaries by the entries under ‘*ekāyana*’: “absolute devotedness to one” (Monier-Williams *ibid.*), “a lonely or retired place”, “monotheism”, and “the sole object” (Apte *ibid.*).

<sup>310</sup> MBh 12.325.1-3: *prāpya śvetaṃ mahādvīpaṃ nārado bhagavān ṛṣiḥ / dadarśa tāt eva narāṇ śvetāṃś candraprabhāṇ śubhān // pūjayām āsa śirasā manasā taiś ca pūjitaḥ / didṛkṣur japyaparamaḥ sarvakṛcchradharaḥ sthitaḥ // bhūtvaikāgramanā vipra ūrdhvbāhur mahāmuniḥ / stotraṃ jagau sa viśvāya nirguṇāya mahātmane //*

<sup>311</sup> The term *bhakti* is used at MBh 12.322.12, which may or may not belong to the oldest layer of the text (Oberlies 1997: 91). *Bhakti* and *bhakta* etc. are found much more frequently in the later portions of Part A, especially those which narrate the stories of King Vasu.

themes in the following tale of the brothers Ekata, Dvita and Trita (323.19-53), which appears to be among the later additions to Part A, is that asceticism (*tapas*) does *not* lead to a vision of god. The brothers practise traditional methods of asceticism for thousands of years in order to see Nārāyaṇa (323.19-21), but are subsequently told that it is not possible for a non-devotee (*abhakta*) to see him (323.48cd). The following verse appears to equate being a devotee with being an Ekāntin,<sup>312</sup> and it is striking that earlier on in this section the White Men, the paradigmatic Ekāntins, are described as practising one-pointedness and *japa* (323.32), but not *tapas*. It should also be noted here that the White Men are depicted as worshipping god with heavenly flowers and herbs (*puṣpāṇi... cauṣadhīḥ*, 323.41cd), which represents a significant departure from the historically earlier descriptions of Ekāntin worship. This move away from asceticism is also evident in another of the apparently youngest portions of Part A. In a verse in the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s opening chapter, we are told that “to see [Nara and Nārāyaṇa] by means of asceticism and ardour is difficult even for the gods. [Only] he to whom they bestow kindness can see both gods.”<sup>313</sup> The theme continues in a short passage in chapter 331. Here it is said that god is not seen by asceticism (*tapasāpi na dṛśyo hi bhagavān*, 331.12a), and that Nārada's viewing of god on White Island was manifested, rather, in consequence of god's kindness (*devaprasādānugataṃ vyaktaṃ tat tasya darśanam*, 331.14ab).

This tendency away from asceticism and towards an emphasis on god's kindness or favour (*prasāda*) is evident in sections of Part A which have been identified by the scholars of *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien* as being among the later additions to chapters 321-326. The trend coincides with an increasing emphasis on the reciprocal, loving relationship between god and his devotees, called *bhakti*. However, the practice of asceticism is not excluded from this new paradigm. Rather, its efficacy is reinterpreted within a *bhakti* framework which emphasises the greater

<sup>312</sup> MBh 12.323.48c-49: *na sa śakyo abhaktena draṣṭuṃ devaḥ katham cana // kāmāṃ kālena mahatā ekāntitvaṃ samāgataiḥ / śakyo draṣṭuṃ sa bhagavān prabhāmaṇḍaladurdrśaḥ //*

<sup>313</sup> MBh 12.321.12: *tapasā tejasā caiva durnirīkṣau surair api / yasya prasādaṃ kurvāte sa devau draṣṭuṃ arhati //*

power of god's benevolence.<sup>314</sup> Two examples from Part B ably demonstrate this method. In the first, Vyāsa declares that he has practised very severe asceticism so that he might know the past, present and future. While practising these austerities on the shore of the Milk Ocean, he says, this knowledge relating to the three times was revealed to him by means of god's kindness.<sup>315</sup> In the second example, Rudra claims that his asceticism and study, or recitation of texts (*svādhyāya*), is prosperous only on account of god's kindness.<sup>316</sup> Passages such as these articulate a rejection of the idea that ascetic practices (and in the latter example, Vedic study) are intrinsically efficacious. According to this historically later view, then, any kind of religious achievement is ultimately dependent upon god rather than the worshipper. This is expressed very clearly in chapter 336: "The person who is seen by Nārāyaṇa shall be awakened. Thus, one is not awakened by one's own desires, O king."<sup>317</sup> As Schreiner (1997b: 164-165) remarks, this represents a complete inversion of the older idea of the vision of god.

In the context of this kind of teaching, it was inevitable that meditative practices such as one-pointedness, which were previously considered to be themselves innately powerful,<sup>318</sup> would be subordinated entirely to practices which aimed solely towards the gratification of god. It was, I propose, in this context that the term *ekānta* came to explicitly denote a monotheism. This sense is never explicit in Part A, wherein the Ekāntins are distinguished from non-Ekāntins primarily by their intensely concentrated ("one-pointed") form of worship. In the story of Ekata, Dvita and Trita, for example, it is not indicated that the brothers fail to achieve a vision of god because they are not monotheists. However, the tale of Vasu's liberation from a hole in the earth (324.17-38), which appears to have been added to

<sup>314</sup> The notion of "renunciation" was also reinterpreted, along the lines of the teaching of renunciation in the *Bhagavadgītā*. This has already been adequately discussed in the secondary literature, see especially Malinar (1997).

<sup>315</sup> MBh 12.327.21-23b: *mayā hi sumahat taptam tapaḥ paramadāruṇam / bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhaviṣyac ca jānīyām iti sattamāḥ // tasya me taptatapasas nirgrhītendriyasya ca / nārāyaṇaprasādena kṣīrodasyānukūlataḥ // traikālikam idam jñānam prādurbhūtaṁ yathepsitam /*

<sup>316</sup> MBh 12.338.16abc: *tvatprasādena bhagavan svādhyāyatapasas mama / kuśalam cāvyaṇam caiva... //*

<sup>317</sup> MBh 12.336.70: *nārāyaṇena drṣṭaś ca pratibuddho bhavet pumān / evam ātmecchayā rājan pratibuddho na jāyate //*. See also 336.68, where the same sentiment is expressed.

<sup>318</sup> Of course, such practices still *were* considered to be innately powerful by certain other religious groups.



Part A after the story of Ekata, Dvita and Trita (Oberlies 1997: 112), offers a striking prologue to ideas which will be taken up at greater length in Part B. For here (324.27-33), Vasu is liberated from the hole not by his own actions, but by the command of god, who is pleased (*tuṣṭa*) by Vasu's constant worship (*pūjā*). As Grünendahl (2002: 327) notes, Vasu's liberation "seems to have [been] regarded as a prototype of the god's intervention on behalf of his devotees". This passage is especially important to the present discussion since it contains the only explicit reference to "monotheism" in the whole of Part A. Although Vasu is never called an Ekāntin, he is referred to here as an *ananyabhakta* (324.29c), a "devotee of no other".

It was, then, precisely in this *bhakti* context, wherein the devotee is liberated by god rather than by himself, that monotheism, or "exclusive devotion", became one of the primary means by which to distinguish Ekāntins from other worshippers. This method of discrimination, which is new to Part B, is demonstrated quite clearly in a passage from chapter 328 (30-32d). Here it is said that for Ekāntins, the most excellent devotees, "there are no other gods" (*ananyadevatāḥ*), whereas inferior devotees worship Brahmā, Śiva and "other gods" (*anyā devatāḥ*). I discuss this passage in greater detail in the following section, the primary concern of which is this relation between Ekāntins and other worshippers.

### *iii.) Sectarianism, syncretism, and the religious identity of the Ekāntins in Part B*

Several modern scholars (e.g. Jaiswal 1967:40; Brockington 1998: 299) have claimed that the Ekāntins in the *Nārāyaṇīya* are devotees of Nārāyaṇa, and that they are to be distinguished on this basis from the followers of Vāsudeva, who are considered to be inferior. These two religious groupings, according to this theory, are thus depicted as two distinct Vaiṣṇava "sects". This reading is based exclusively on the following passage:

*aho hy ekāntinaḥ sarvān prīṇāti bhagavān hariḥ / vidhiprayuktāṃ pūjāṃ ca gṛhṇāti bhagavān svayam // ye tu dagdhendhanā loke puṇyapāpavivarjitāḥ / teṣāṃ tvayābhinirdiṣṭā pāraṃparyāgatā gatiḥ // caturthyāṃ caiva te gatyāṃ gacchanti puruṣottamam / ekāntinas tu puruṣā gacchanti paramaṃ padam // nūnam ekāntadharmo 'yaṃ śreṣṭho nārāyaṇapriyaḥ / agatvā gatayas tisro yad gacchanty avyayaṃ harim //* – “So! Lord Hari loves all Ekāntins, and the Lord himself accepts worship that is performed according to the prescribed methods. But those whose fuel is burnt up in the world and are [therefore] free from merit and demerit, their path has been indicated by you, and handed down by a succession of teachers. Those on the fourth path go to the Supreme Person; Ekāntins, indeed, are the persons who go to the highest place. Certainly, this *ekāntadharma*, dear to Nārāyaṇa, is the most excellent because, not going along the [other] three paths, they [i.e. Ekāntins] go to the immortal Hari.” (MBh 12.336.1-4)

The precise meaning of these verses is rather obscure, and hinges on how we interpret the reference to the “three paths” (*gatayas tisro*) which are not travelled by those who follow the *ekāntadharma*. The syntax in the fourth verse, which contains this reference, is particularly puzzling. Following Nīlakaṇṭha’s commentary,<sup>319</sup> scholars including Ganguli (2000: 187), Jaiswal, Gonda (1970: 54), Brockington and Sutton (2000: 114) have interpreted these “three paths” as referring to three soteriological “stages” represented by the deified Vṛṣṇi heroes Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa. According to this interpretation, followers of Vāsudeva (referred to as Puruṣottama at 336.3b) must pass through each of these three deities before reaching the fourth deity (i.e. Vāsudeva), whereas Ekāntins go straight to “the immortal Hari” (i.e. Nārāyaṇa). It is quite easy to see how this interpretation has been arrived at, but it is beset with problems which I will address below.

The claim that *gatayas tisro* designates the deities Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa is no doubt based on the belief that this passage refers back to MBh 12.332.13-18. Certainly, the four verses translated above represent Janamejaya’s summary of what he has learnt thus far, and so it is entirely appropriate that we should interpret them as referring to teachings which have already been articulated in earlier chapters of the *Nārāyaṇīya*. The only previous account of the Vṛṣṇi deities in a soteriological context occurs at 332.13-18. The passage reads as follows: the

<sup>319</sup> BhBhD on 12.336.3-4: *caturthyāṃ aniruddhapradyumnaśaṃkarṣaṇān apekṣya caturthyāṃ vāsudevākhyāyāṃ haribhaktānāṃ viśeṣam āha ekāntinas tv iti... (336.3) / gatayaḥ gatiḥ aniruddhādīṃś trīṇ anupāśyaiva vāsudevaṃ gacchatīti arthaḥ (336.4) /*

liberation of those who are “free from merit and demerit” (*puṇyapāpavivarjitāḥ*) begins with a journey towards the sun (*āditya*), which is called the gate (*dvāra*) (13).<sup>320</sup> Their bodies burnt by the sun, these beings become invisible and infinitesimal (*paramāṇu*), and they enter the god (i.e. *Āditya*) in this form (14). Liberated from there, they stay in the body of Aniruddha, and then, having become *manas*, they enter into Pradyumna (15). Liberated from Pradyumna, these “most excellent Brahmins” (*viprapravarāḥ*), the Sāṃkhyas together with the Bhāgavatas, then enter into Saṃkarṣaṇa, the *jīva* (16). Then, having transcended the three *guṇas*, they enter into Vāsudeva, who is called the “knower of the field” (*kṣetrajñam*) (17). Verse 18, which I have referred to above, asserts that, with their “minds concentrated and controlled, senses restrained, having attained the state of *ekānta*, they enter into Vāsudeva”.<sup>321</sup> As Malinar (1997: 281) has pointed out, this last verse is at odds with the preceding verses, in which the liberated beings have already been divested of their bodies (*sarvāṅga*) and minds (*manas*). Hence, it is very probable that verses 13e-17 have been inserted into this passage, and that verse 18 originally immediately followed 13cd (ibid.). We must assume, of course, that this interpolation occurred prior to the composition of 336.1-4, if indeed the “three paths” mentioned there refer to Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa.

There are, at the outset, at least two problems with the assumption that 336.1-4 refers back to 332.13-18. Firstly, 336.4, as we have established, refers to three paths (or “stages” if that interpretation is preferred), whereas at 332.13-18, the entrance of the liberated beings into Vāsudeva is preceded by their entrance into, and “liberation” from, *four* deities, namely *Āditya*, Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa. Bakker (1997: 59-62) notes that in this account *Āditya*, the sun, takes the place of *Sāmba*, one of the original “five heroes” (*pañcavīra*) of the Vṛṣṇi clan,

<sup>320</sup> The description “free from merit and demerit” (*puṇyapāpavivarjita*) is also used to refer to liberated beings who “enter into the thousand-rayed god” at MBh 12.327.5e-6.

<sup>321</sup> MBh 12.332.13-18: *ye hi niṣkalmaṣā loke puṇyapāpavivarjitāḥ / teṣāṃ vai kṣemam adhvānaṃ gacchatāṃ dvijasattama // sarvalokatamohantā ādityo dvāram ucyate /// ādityadagdhasarvāṅgā adṛśyāḥ kena cit kva cit / paramāṇubhūtā bhūtvā tu taṃ devaṃ praviśanty uta // tasmād api vinirmuktā aniruddhatanau sthitāḥ / manobhūtās tato bhūyaḥ pradyumnaṃ praviśanty uta // pradyumnāc cāpi nirmuktā jīvaṃ saṃkarṣaṇaṃ tathā / viśanti viprapravarāḥ sāṃkhyā bhāgavatāiḥ saha // tatas traiguṇyahīnās te paramātmānam aṇjasā / praviśanti dvijaśreṣṭha kṣetrajñam nirguṇātmakam // sarvāvāsaṃ vāsudevaṃ kṣetrajñam viddhi tattvataḥ /// samāhitamanaskāś ca niyatāḥ saṃyatendriyāḥ / ekāntabhāvopagatā vāsudevaṃ viśanti te //*

who was subsequently expelled from the pantheon when Pāñcarātra authors developed a theology of four differentiated forms of god (*vyūha*). Sāmba, observes Bakker, was closely related to the cult of the sun (Sūrya), both mythologically and iconographically. In other words, in the above account, which is not described or alluded to anywhere else in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, Āditya is almost certainly to be considered as much a “stage” in the process of ascent undertaken by liberated beings as are the other Vṛṣṇi deities. Of course, it could be argued that Sāmba or Āditya had already been dropped from the pantheon by the time 336.1-4 was composed, and that the devotee of Nārāyaṇa who authored these verses was aware of this, and adjusted the number accordingly. This, then, would be the only place in the text in which the entrance of liberated beings into Vāsudeva is represented as the fourth stage in a hierarchy of ascent. But this still leaves us with the following question: why did the author of 336.1-4 choose to refer only to “three paths” which are not travelled by Ekāntins? For if, as is alleged, these verses can be taken as evidence for an intra-Vaiṣṇava sectarianism, then surely there are four “paths” which Ekāntins do not travel, for they do not go to Vāsudeva either - they go to Hari or Nārāyaṇa.

This brings me to the second problem with the assumption that 336.1-4 refers back to 332.13-18. At verse 18, as we have seen, those who enter into Vāsudeva are said to have “attained the state of *ekānta*” (*ekāntabhāvopagata*). This is another way of saying that they are Ekāntins. According to the “sectarian” interpretation of 336.1-4, however, Ekāntins are devotees of Nārāyaṇa, and *not* of Vāsudeva. In other words, the very passage that 336.1-4 supposedly refers back to explicitly contradicts the idea that Ekāntins are to be distinguished from the followers of Vāsudeva. Moreover, if, as is alleged (for example by Jaiswal 1967: 40 n. 3), the “Supreme Person” (*puruṣottama*) is used exclusively as an epithet of Vāsudeva (and thus can only refer to him at 336.3b), then there are also other instances in the *Nārāyaṇīya* in which Ekāntins are identified as followers of this deity (e.g. 323.24, 336.66). However, it is not at all obvious that *puruṣottama* at 336.3b refers specifically to Vāsudeva. For, contrary to Jaiswal’s claim, elsewhere in the *Nārāyaṇīya* we find this honorific applied to, for instance, the ṛṣis Nara and Nārāyaṇa (*puruṣottamau*, 331.29b), Hari (331.41d, 335.41b, 62d, 65d) and, later in chapter 336 itself, to the god Nārāyaṇa

(336.18b, 66b, 74b). Indeed, the final section of the *Nārāyaṇīya* explicitly addresses the question (asked by Rudra at 338.23) “who is the *Puruṣottama*?” Brahmā’s answer is quite clear. The “Supreme Person” is Nārāyaṇa (339.14). Vāsudeva is not mentioned here, nor indeed anywhere else in the final four chapters (336-339) of the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Finally, it should be noted that if we assume that *puruṣottama* at 336.3b refers to Vāsudeva, then this would be the only passage in the whole of the *Nārāyaṇīya* in which Vāsudeva and Nārāyaṇa, or their respective devotees, are clearly distinguished from each other in such a manner.

In light of the above, we must conclude that the “sectarian” reading of 336.1-4 is unwarranted. It is far more likely that the “Supreme Person” in this passage refers to (Hari-)Nārāyaṇa,<sup>322</sup> as is the case when the term *puruṣottama* is employed later on in the same chapter. This requires, then, that we take the enclitic particle *tu* at 336.3c to be emphatic rather than adversative, and that we interpret “the Supreme Person” and “the highest place” as referring to the same thing. Now we must address the question as to what is referred to by the “three paths” (*gatayas tisro*) at 336.4c. As mentioned above, much of the secondary literature on the *Nārāyaṇīya* follows Nīlakaṇṭha’s reading. Esnoul (1979: 197-198) does not appear to agree with this reading, but does not directly address the problem. Nor does the collaborative volume *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien*. Thus far, I have been able to find in the Indological literature only one alternative interpretation of these verses, which is that offered by Peter Hill. According to Hill (2001: 291), the *ekāntadharmā* is the most excellent “since, without passing through the three stages (of life) they go (directly) to the immutable Hari.” We can presume that by “stages of life” here, Hill is referring to the *āśramas* in their “classical formulation” (Olivelle 1993: 131), i.e. as successive modes of life. I do not find this reading very convincing, for reasons which will become obvious shortly.

The passage in question (336.1-4) implies that there are four “paths” or “ways” (*gati*), and that among these the way of the Ekāntins is the most excellent. To my mind, the earlier teaching in the *Nārāyaṇīya* which this most closely resembles is that given at 12.328.30-32. Here, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that his devotees are of

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<sup>322</sup> This is consistent with Esnoul’s (1979: 197-198) translation of these verses.

“four kinds” (*caturvidhā*). “Among these”, he continues, “the Ekāntins, [for whom] there are no other gods, are the most excellent. I alone am the way (*gati*) for them, the performers of actions not motivated by desire.” He goes on to say that the remaining three types of devotee desire the fruits of their actions, and that they are all destined to “sink down”. The following verse, which may have been added later, identifies these latter devotees with the worship of Brahmā, Śiva and “other gods”.<sup>323</sup> Malinar (1997: 258-264) notes that this classification of four types of devotee is most likely borrowed from the *Bhagavadgītā* (7.16-17b),<sup>324</sup> and that the immediate context of the above verses in MBh 12.328 – namely, a conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna which extols the merits of the renunciation of personal desires – contains obvious echoes of that text. Unlike in the *Bhagavadgītā*, the other three types of devotee are not explicitly named in MBh 12.328.

We return now to MBh 12.336.1-4. These verses also occur in a context which refers to the *Bhagavadgītā* (at 336.8).<sup>325</sup> Indeed, Vaiśampāyana’s response to Janamejaya’s questions (at 336.6e-7b) includes the first reference to the conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna since the latter’s extended discussion (328.5-330.71), during which the classification of the four kinds of devotee was taught. Later in chapter 336, the Ekāntins are characterised, as at 328.30, by the fact that their actions are not motivated by desire (*āśīṭhikarmavivarjita*, 336.58f). That neither the three other kinds of devotee nor the three paths not travelled by Ekāntins are explicitly named may suggest that this fourfold classification is merely a formal model, authoritative because of its link to the teaching of the four kinds of devotee in the *Bhagavadgītā*. In other words, it is quite possible that the author of 336.1-4 had no particular “three paths” in mind when these verses were composed. However, it is also possible, in my opinion, that three other distinct “paths” were intended by the

<sup>323</sup> MBh 12.328.30-32d: *caturvidhā mama janā bhaktā evaṃ hi śrutam / teṣāṃ ekāntinaḥ śreṣṭhās te caivānanyadevatāḥ // aham eva gatis teṣāṃ nirāśīṭhikarmakāriṇām // ye ca śiṣṭās trayo bhaktāḥ phalakāmā hi te matāḥ / sarve cyavanadharmāṇaḥ pratibuddhas tu śreṣṭhabhāk // brahmāṇaṃ śitikaṇṭhaṃ ca yās cānyā devatāḥ smṛtāḥ prabuddhavaryāḥ sevante māṃ evaiṣyanti yat param //*

<sup>324</sup> Malinar’s (2007: 132) translation of these verses in the *Bhagavadgītā* reads as follows: “Four kinds of good men seek my love, Arjuna: the suffering (*ārta*), the seeker of knowledge (*jijñāsu*), the seeker of wealth (*arthārthin*), and the one who knows (me, *jñānin*), best of Bhāratas. Among them, the one who knows (me) is supreme since his devotion is exclusive and he is always self-controlled”.

<sup>325</sup> MBh 12.336.8: *samupoḍheṣv anīkeṣu kurupāṇḍavayor mṛdhe / arjune vīmanaske ca gītā bhagavatā svayam //*

author of this passage, and that clues to the identity of these are provided in the verses which immediately follow:

*sahopaniṣadān vedān ye viprāḥ samyag āsthitāḥ / paṭhanti vidhim āsthāya ye cāpi yatidharmināḥ // tebhyo viśiṣṭāṃ jñāmi gatim ekāntināṃ nṛṇāṃ /* – “Those Brahmins who recite perfectly the Vedas together with the Upaniṣads, in accordance with the prescribed method, and those who follow the *dharma* of the ascetic - I know that the way of the Ekāntin men is better than those!” (MBh 12.336.5-6d)

To whom is Janamejaya referring when he speaks of those who follow the *dharma* of the ascetic? As we have seen above, in the first chapter of Part B of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the *dharma* of the ascetic is called the *nivṛttidharma*, and it is associated with the traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The *nivṛttidharma* is contrasted there with the *dharma* of *pravṛtti*, which is associated with the Veda (327.61-66). These three traditions (Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda) are listed alongside each other again at the end of chapter 335, shortly before Janamejaya’s reference to the “three paths” not travelled by Ekāntins. Here it says that Hari is the “receptacle” (*nidhi*) of the Vedas, and of asceticism (*tapas*), that he is “Sāṃkhya” and “Yoga”. In the following verse, the Vedas are typified by “sacrifices” (*yajñā*) which have Nārāyaṇa as their nature. The same is then said of the path (*gati*) that is intent upon Nārāyaṇa, which is epitomised by asceticism (*tapas*). Though Sāṃkhya and Yoga are not mentioned here a second time, they are clearly intended, for “the path intent upon Nārāyaṇa” refers to the *nivṛttidharma*, which is contrasted then with the *dharma* that is characterised by *pravṛtti*. Both *dharma*s have Nārāyaṇa as their nature.<sup>326</sup> A few verses later, ascetics (*yati*) who “know the Self” are identified as Sāṃkhyas and Yogins.<sup>327</sup> In this latter verse, as is common in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, Sāṃkhya and Yoga are nominally distinguished from each other, but treated as more or less the same.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> MBh 335.74-77b: *eṣa vedanidhiḥ śrīmān eṣa vai tapaso nidhiḥ / eṣa yogaś ca sāmkhyaṃ ca brahma cāgryaṃ harir vibhuḥ // nārāyaṇaparā vedā yajñā nārāyaṇātmakāḥ / tapo nārāyaṇaparaṃ nārāyaṇaparā gatiḥ // nārāyaṇaparaṃ satyam ṛtaṃ nārāyaṇātmakam / nārāyaṇaparo dharmāḥ punarāvṛttidurlabhaḥ // pravṛttilakṣaṇaś caiva dharmo nārāyaṇātmakāḥ /*

<sup>327</sup> MBh 12.335.85: *sāmkyānāṃ yogināṃ cāpi yatīnāṃ ātmavedināṃ / manīṣitaṃ vijānāti keśavo na tu tasya te //*

<sup>328</sup> That they are both characterised as *knowing* the Self indicates that the soteriological procedures of Yoga are here assimilated to those of Sāṃkhya which in the MBh, as Edgerton (1924) has shown,

For the present purposes, it is important to note that although the *Nārāyaṇīya* does not explicitly differentiate between Sāṃkhya and Yoga on matters of practice or doctrine, it nonetheless recognises them as two distinct ascetic traditions or “paths”.

Of course, the chief purpose of this passage at the end of chapter 335 is to assimilate and subordinate the three traditions called Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga to a supreme and all-encompassing theology of Nārāyaṇa. This method is already met with in late portions of Part A (326.64-65, 100-101b) and it can also be found in previous chapters in Part B (e.g. at 327.60-66, and 334.14-17). However, the most sustained attempt to articulate the inclusion of Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga within a single comprehensive *dharma*, which originates from Nārāyaṇa (336.10) and has Nārāyaṇa as its goal (*niṣṭhā*, 337.65), occurs in chapters 336-337. In chapter 336, this *dharma*, alternatively called *ekānta* (4a), *sātvata* (27ab, 31c, 78ab), and *pañcarātra* (76), is shown to contain within itself the seemingly antithetical paths represented by the Veda, on the one hand, and by Sāṃkhya and Yoga on the other. The question as to how (and why) Nārāyaṇa has established both the *pravṛtti* and the *nivṛtti dharmas* has already been answered in the opening chapter of Part B (327), but only now is the *dharma* of the Ekāntins explicitly shown to include and transcend these. Thus, for instance, we are told that it is with the *ekāntadharmā* that Nārāyaṇa created the sacrifices to gods and ancestors (*daivaṃ pitṛyam*) (336.13def). The *ekāntadharmā* is the same as (*tulya*) Sāṃkhya and Yoga (336.69ab). Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the “Āraṇyaka of the Vedas” (*vedāraṇyaka*) are mutually complementary parts (*parasparāṅgāni*) of the *dharma* of the Ekāntins, called in this instance *pañcarātra*.<sup>329</sup> In chapter 337, in answer to Janamejaya’s question as to whether the branches of knowledge Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pañcarātra and the Āraṇyaka of the Vedas have the same goal, or different goals (1-2), Vaiśampāyana replies that according to tradition and knowledge, all branches of knowledge have Nārāyaṇa as their goal (63c-64b). He alone is the creator of the *śāstras* (65). ‘Pañcarātra’ here appears to be simply another name for the *ekāntadharmā* since, unlike the other branches of

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emphasises the soteriological method of knowledge. Elsewhere in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, the distinct tradition of Yoga is shown to favour the method of strength or power (*bala*). On this see Fitzgerald (*forthcoming*).

<sup>329</sup> MBh 12.336.76: *evam ekaṃ sāmṃkhyayogaṃ vedāraṇyakam eva ca / parasparāṅgāny etāni pañcarātraṃ ca kathyate // eṣa ekāntinām dharmo nārāyaṇaparātmakaḥ III*.



knowledge, it is proclaimed directly by Nārāyaṇa (60-63b), and it is said that “knowers of *pañcarātra*” attain the state of *ekānta* (*ekāntabhāva*) and enter into Hari (67).<sup>330</sup> Pointedly, the same is not said of experts in Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda, though the next verse (68) does affirm that each of these is eternal (*sanātana*).<sup>331</sup>

On the basis of the exposition of the *ekāntadharmā* in chapters 336-337, then, it seems reasonable to infer that the three “paths” not travelled by Ekāntins are precisely Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda. These do not lead to “the highest place”. It has already been stated that Nārāyaṇa, or the *dharma* of Nārāyaṇa, is “difficult to reach for those who are subject to rebirth” (*punarāvṛttidurlabhaḥ*), by whom is meant the followers of the Veda and the path of ritual action (i.e. *pravṛtti*).<sup>332</sup> Later in chapter 336, it will be claimed that Hari “does not look at” one who is born into the *pravṛttidharma*. Such a one is looked at, rather, by Brahmā (whose “glance” is not salvific).<sup>333</sup> And in chapter 339, Brahmā will clearly state that the “supreme path” cannot be reached by the methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga.<sup>334</sup> The author/s of chapters 336-337 nonetheless include these three paths within the fourth and highest path, the comprehensive *dharma* of the Ekāntins, also called ‘Pañcarātra’. This deliberately inclusivist or syncretist agenda, wherein other teachings or traditions are subsumed and subordinated, appears to belong to the later redactions of the *Nārāyaṇīya* since it is only evident in the supposedly youngest portions of Part A (as identified by Oberlies 1997a and 1997b), and in Part B.

In the remainder of this section, I will draw attention to the fact that a syncretist policy was applied not only to Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda, but also to what appear to have originally been distinct traditions of worship. For example, the denominations

<sup>330</sup> MBh 12.337.67: *pañcarātravido ye tu yathākramaparā nṛpa / ekāntabhāvopagatās te hariṃ praviśanti vai //*

<sup>331</sup> As Schreiner (1997b: 162) notes, the inclusion of Pāśupata among the “other” branches of knowledge at 337.59 and 62 is obviously a later addition, since Janamejaya’s original question does not refer to this tradition.

<sup>332</sup> See MBh 12.327.67ef: *so ’haṃ kriyāvatām panthāḥ punarāvṛttidurlabhaḥ ///*; and MBh 12.335.76c-77b, transliterated above.

<sup>333</sup> MBh 336.71-72: *rājasī tāmāsī caiva vyāmiśre prakṛtī smṛte / tadātmakam hi puruṣam jāyamānaṃ viśāṃ pate // pravṛttilakṣaṇair yuktaṃ nāvekṣati hariḥ svayam /// paśyaty enaṃ jāyamānaṃ brahmā lokapitāmahaḥ / rajasā tāmāsā caiva mānuṣaṃ samabhiplutam //*

<sup>334</sup> MBh 12.339.7c-8b: *sāṃkhyena vidhinā caiva yogena ca yathākramam // cintayāmi gatiṃ cāsya na gatiṃ vedmi cottamām /*

*sātvata* and *bhāgavata* are clearly not used in this text to refer to distinct “sects”.<sup>335</sup> Rather, they appear merely as alternative names for the followers of Nārāyaṇa. Moreover, as we will see, the authors of the *Nārāyaṇīya* make no attempt to explicitly subordinate the followers of Vāsudeva, for instance, to those of Nārāyaṇa. Rather, their equivalence, and indeed that of the gods themselves, is assumed. Thus, in the passage 328.16-29, the names Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa are used interchangeably to refer to the same god. This also occurs at 333.24-25. Elsewhere, at 331.9-11 the name Viṣṇu is used interchangeably with Vāsudeva, while at 335.87 it is said that Viṣṇu is called Vāsudeva because he is the abode of all beings (*sarvabhūtakṛtāvāsa*).<sup>336</sup> In chapter 328, when Janamejaya asks for the various names by which Hari-Nārāyaṇa is known, Vaiśampāyana refers him to Hari/Keśava’s answer when asked the same question by Arjuna. Here we are told that Hari-Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa is called Vāsudeva because he is the abode of all beings (*sarvabhūtādhivāsa*, 36cd), and that he is also called Viṣṇu among other names. The name Vāsudeva itself occurs on four separate occasions in Part B, and is used as follows: i.) as one of god’s various names, in the verse just referred to (328.36); ii.) as a name for Viṣṇu (335.87), as referred to above; iii.) at 331.9-11, wherein Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu are assimilated;<sup>337</sup> and iv.) as the fifth and final deified Vṛṣṇi hero into whom the liberated “Sāṃkhyas and Bhāgavatas” enter (332.13-18), as discussed earlier. In this last passage, as on other occasions, Vāsudeva’s name is explained etymologically – he is the abode of all (*sarvāvāsa*, 332.17e). He is, in addition, called here the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*, 17d, f), a designation which is also applied to Vāsudeva in one of the apparently youngest passages of Part A (326.38) (discussed below), and which is elsewhere assigned to Nārāyaṇa (325.4/05, 327.67, 339.6), Hari (336.54), and Kṛṣṇa (330.9).

<sup>335</sup> On the equivalence in the *Nārāyaṇīya* of the names *sātvata* and *pañcarātra* see Matsubara (1994: 59-60) and Oberlies (1997b: 150-151). That the term *bhāgavata* does not denote a separate “Vaiṣṇava sect” is apparent from the fact that the Bhāgavatas are shown to worship both Nārāyaṇa (MBh 12.327.2, 331.43) and Vāsudeva (332.16-18).

<sup>336</sup> MBh 335.87: *sarveṣāṃ āśrayo viṣṇur aiśvaram vidhim āsthitaḥ / sarvabhūtakṛtāvāso vāsudeveti cocyate //*.

<sup>337</sup> MBh 12.331.9-11: *na citraṃ kṛtavāṃs tatra yad āryo me dhanaṃjayaḥ / vāsudevasahāyo yaḥ prāptavāñ jayam uttamam //* *na cāsya kiṃ cid aprāpyaṃ manye lokeṣv api triṣu / trailokyanātho viṣṇuḥ sa yasyāsīt sāhyakṛt sakhā //* *dhanyās ca sarva evāsan brahmaṃs te mama pūrvakāḥ / hitāya śreyase caiva yeṣāṃ āsīt janārdanaḥ //*.

The infrequency with which Vāsudeva’s name is used in Part B is consistent with Part A, where it is found in only three separate passages, and implied in a fourth. In these it is used as follows: i.) as a name for Nārāyaṇa during Nārada’s *stotra* (325.4/130); ii.) as the name of the “twenty-fifth” principle (*tattva*), the “Self of the world” (*lokasyātmā*), the “Supreme Self” (*paramātmā*), the *puruṣa* who is seen by knowledge (*jñāna*), the Self of all beings, the knower of the field etc., in a passage (326.20-39) which, employing terminology usually associated with Sāṃkhya, describes the reabsorption (*pra-√lī*) of the five universal elements, and the successive emergence of the embodied self (*jīva*), the mind (*manas*) and the act of self-formulation (*ahaṃkāra*). The latter are personified as, respectively, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Oberlies (1997a) adjudges this passage to have been interpolated into chapter 326 at a late stage; iii.) Vāsudeva is not named in the verses 326.68-71d, but it is likely he who is referred to as the “fourth form” (*mūrtiś caturthī*) who created Saṃkarṣaṇa, who in turn begot Pradyumna, from whom is born Aniruddha, and then Brahmā; and iv.) during the *paraṃparā* which draws Part A to a close, it is said that this narrative is not to be given to one who is not a devotee of Vāsudeva.<sup>338</sup> In the same passage, we are told that this “great Upaniṣad” has been sung by Nārāyaṇa (326.100-101b), and that Janārdana should be worshipped as the Supreme Person (*puruṣottama*, 326.119-120).

What can we infer from these infrequent references to Vāsudeva? Clearly, we must conclude that if the *Nārāyaṇīya* was at one time in the hands of “sectarian” followers of Vāsudeva, then they did not make very good use of it. It is much more likely, of course, that these eight passages (from Parts A and B) were included in the text by authors who also professed devotion to Nārāyaṇa.<sup>339</sup> Since Nārāyaṇa is clearly the principal god in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and since archaeological and inscriptional evidence (on which see e.g. Härtel 1987) tells us that the worship of Vāsudeva was not *always* linked to the worship of Nārāyaṇa, we must assume that

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<sup>338</sup> MBh 12.326.113: *idam ākhyānam ārṣeyaṃ paraṃparyāgataṃ nṛpa / nāvāsudevabhaktāya tvayā deyaṃ katham cana //*.

<sup>339</sup> The only alternative, as I see it, would be to argue that the text passed from followers of Nārāyaṇa to followers of Vāsudeva, and then *back* to followers of Nārāyaṇa. The latter must have then either thoroughly revised it, removing most (but not all) of the references to Vāsudeva, or found a text where such references were so few and far between that they were not considered worthy of removal.

followers of Nārāyaṇa had adopted Vāsudeva into their own theology. They may have done this for purely “political” reasons, i.e. as a way of subordinating and dominating a rival “sect”. But the *Nārāyaṇīya* offers no evidence for this, and in fact points to another explanation. As we have seen above, the only “Vāsudeva passages” which do not merely assimilate this god to Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa are those which identify the four or five deified Vṛṣṇi heroes with a series of emergent ontological principles (326.35-39), which function also as successive cosmic realms or levels through which liberated beings ascend (332.13-18). We can presume, then, that it is these passages which are able to offer us a better idea as to why Vāsudeva was considered important and worthy of adoption. If this is the case, it is inevitable that Vāsudeva’s importance derived in some way from his association with Saṃkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

That these four “forms” (*mūrti*, 326.68a) were together considered important is proven by the fact that they are explicitly incorporated into the theology of Hari-Nārāyaṇa. This occurs at 336.51-56 and at 339.12, and 18-20. In the former passage, it is said that Hari is viewed as having one, two, three or four forms (*vyūha*).<sup>340</sup> Strongly echoing the account of the “Vāsudeva passage” 326.20-39, outlined above, these four *vyūhas* are identified as the knower of the field (*kṣetrājña*, 336.54a), the embodied self (*jīva*, 336.54cd), the mind (*manas*, 336.55a), and the “agent, effect and cause” (*kartā ca kāryaṃ kāraṇam*, 336.56ab. Cf. 326.37). In the final chapter of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, meanwhile, Brahmā reveals that Nārāyaṇa has a “fourfold” form (339.12, 20), and that in his role as creator he is called ‘Aniruddha’ (339.18ab).<sup>341</sup> Why, then, did Nārāyaṇa theologians consider it expedient to adopt these differentiated divine forms?

The answer must surely involve the ontological principles or “levels” with which they are identified. Elsewhere in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (e.g. 12.228, 291, 293-294), these principles (*tattva*) belong to the evolutionary cosmogony of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. According to this cosmogony, the lower ontological principles emerge out of the higher ones (see e.g. 294.27-28). The Vṛṣṇi heroes might have

<sup>340</sup> MBh 12.336.53: *ekavyūhavibhāgo vā kva cid dvivyūhasaṃjñitaḥ / trivyūhaś cāpi saṃkhyātaś caturvyūhaś ca dṛśyate* // . These are the only uses of the term *vyūha* in the *Nārāyaṇīya*.

<sup>341</sup> Schreiner et al. (1997c: 413 n. 256) have pointed out that 339.20 itself echoes 336.56.

been considered particularly germane to such a process since Pradyumna and Aniruddha are, respectively, the son and grandson of Vāsudeva. By incorporating these successively lower forms of god into this evolutionary scheme, the author of 326.20-39 is able to include within it both a god who remains completely transcendent, and a creator god from whom the universe originates (i.e. Aniruddha, 326.37). This much has been stated by numerous scholars before me. But the divinisation of these levels is important to the soteriological process too. Fitzgerald (forthcoming) discusses the distinct soteriological methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, as described in the “text-pair” MBh 12.289-290. Adherents of the method of Yoga, Fitzgerald shows, attempt to forcibly ascend through the levels to *mokṣa*. The Sāṃkhyas, meanwhile, claim that it is possible to attain mokṣa by way of “a comprehensive knowledge and understanding... [of] ever higher cosmic realities” (ibid: 298).<sup>342</sup> The author of MBh 12.332.13-18 distinguishes the *ekānta* path from both of these. For here, the “Sāṃkhyas together with the Bhāgavatas” do not liberate themselves either forcibly or by knowledge. Rather, each divinised realm that these beings pass through *liberates them*. In other words, by assigning the Vṛṣṇi deities to these levels, the author of this passage is able to illustrate the apparently new idea that the devotee is liberated not by himself but by god.

#### *iv.) Conclusions*

In a late addition to Part A of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and in Part B, ‘Pañcarātra’ is named as the comprehensive Upaniṣad (326.100), or the *dharma* of the Ekāntins (336.76), both of which subsume the three traditions Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Already in the oldest parts of the text, Nārada is shown to combine the practice of Vedic recitation with ascetic and meditative techniques typical of the liberation-seeking Sāṃkhya and

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<sup>342</sup> I am very grateful to Professor Fitzgerald for allowing me to read and refer to several of his as yet unpublished works.

Yoga paths.<sup>343</sup> The attempt to formulate a soteriological method which incorporates *japa*, *tapas* and meditation (*dhyāna*) can be found also in an earlier section of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (MBh 12.189-193). The integration of the ways of *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti* is also met with in a section of Part A of the *Nārāyaṇīya* which appears to belong to one of the earliest “layers” added to the core narrative, namely the account of the Śāstra promulgated by the Citraśikhaṇḍins. Here it is said that this teaching is the womb of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, and that it is possessed of the four Vedas.<sup>344</sup> However, the notion of a teaching which is *distinguished* from Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and yet incorporates them all, is only encountered in the Paraṃparā which closes Part A,<sup>345</sup> and, as we have seen, in Part B. Here, this *dharma* of the Ekāntins is named Pañcarātra.

Our earliest references, then, to a religious tradition called ‘Pañcarātra’ depict this tradition as one in which previously distinct religious identities are integrated under a new name. As we have seen, this ‘Pañcarātra’ incorporates not only Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, but also what were originally separate “Vaiṣṇava” traditions of worship, namely the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata.<sup>346</sup> It is not at all easy to determine the “sectarian background” of the Nārāyaṇa theologians who introduce us to the Pañcarātra, but it is clear that those responsible for the composition of the oldest parts of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, who taught the Ekāntin worship of Nārāyaṇa and sought liberation from worldly existence, emerged from a religious culture which had much in common with that of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. As I have shown above, the term *ekānta* appears to have originally been intimately connected with practices of renunciation, asceticism, and “one-pointed” meditation, all of which are shown to be central, in other sections of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, to the soteriological methods adopted by

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<sup>343</sup> See especially MBh 12.322.3ab: *vedāḥ svadhūtā mama lokanātha; taptam tapo... /*; and MBh 12.325.2-3, discussed above.

<sup>344</sup> MBh 12.322.37: *pravṛttau ca nivṛttau ca yonir etad bhaviṣyati / ṛgyajuḥsāmabhir juṣṭam atharvāṅgirasais tathā //*.

<sup>345</sup> MBh 12.326.100: *idaṃ mahopaniṣadam caturvedasamanvitam / sāmkyayogakṛtam tena pañcarātrānuśabdītam //*.

<sup>346</sup> I use the category “Vaiṣṇava” here in its modern, Indological sense. Bhāgavata and Sātvata are not called “Vaiṣṇava” in the *Nārāyaṇīya*.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga.<sup>347</sup> Part A also contains other indications of the proximity between Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the *imaginaire* of the Nārāyaṇa theologians. As Malinar (1997: 254) points out, the seer Nārada, who flies to the summit of Mount Meru, is depicted as one who is well advanced in the practice of yoga. As discussed above, the apparently “Sāṃkhyan” cosmological scheme of the twenty-five ontological principles (*tattva*) is employed. The claim that the Self (*ātman*) can be seen by the yoga of knowledge (*jñānayoga*, 321.40, see also 326.23) is a clearly Sāṃkhyan idea. Indeed, such claims indicate that, insofar as the methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga can be clearly distinguished from one another (as they are, for instance, at MBh 12.289-290), the soteriology of the *Nārāyaṇīya* is closer to that of Sāṃkhya. This is also evident in the description of the White Men as having transcended the sense faculties, and of the liberated beings at 332.13-18 as being divested of their minds and senses as they ascend through the levels. These accounts represent an idea key to Sāṃkhya soteriology, and are distinct from the Yoga path wherein liberated beings retain the use of their senses (MBh 12.289, see Fitzgerald: forthcoming).

That Sāṃkhya is not recognised as a soteriological method distinct from the methods employed by the *Nārāyaṇīya*’s chief protagonists prior to the latest additions to chapter 326 suggests, indeed, that the religious worldview of the Nārāyaṇa theologians responsible for Part A was closer to Sāṃkhya than it was to Vedic ritualism. This tendency is less apparent in Part B, wherein the attempt to construct a distinct religious identity around the idea of a superior and comprehensive *ekāntadharma* involves the reinterpretation of the notion of renunciation, as already articulated in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Thus, the “extinction of all duties” or the *dharma* of the ascetic is now considered alongside Vedic ritualism, and both are subordinated to the practice of constant devotion to Nārāyaṇa, otherwise called *ekāntabhakti*, which espouses only the renunciation of actions motivated by desire, or the “annihilation of cravings”, and aims only to please god.<sup>348</sup>

<sup>347</sup> On the importance of asceticism for Sāṃkhya methods, see e.g. MBh 12.231.5, 233.7, and 290.3, 60. As to Yoga see e.g. 12.228, 294.

<sup>348</sup> The references to *ekāntabhakti* and to “cravings that are annihilated” are found at MBh 12.336.66-67: *manīṣitaṃ ca prāpnoti cintayan puruṣottamam / ekāntabhaktiḥ satataṃ nārāyaṇaparāyaṇaḥ // manīṣiṇo hi ye ke cid yatayo mokṣakāṅkṣiṇaḥ / teṣāṃ vai chinnaṭṭṣṇānāṃ yogakṣemavaho hariḥ //*

## 8. The Ekāntins in the Pāñcarātra Literature

### i.) The terms *ekānta* and *ekāntin* in the Pāñcarātra scriptures

In a contribution to the volume *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien*, Reinhold Grünendahl (1997) discusses the “profile of ideas” (*Ideenprofil*) which many later works borrow from the *Nārāyaṇīya*. In particular, he draws attention to a large number of parallel passages that the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇurahasya*, and the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*<sup>349</sup> share with the *Nārāyaṇīya*. In this later literature, as we would expect, events from Part A of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, such as Nārada’s journey to Mount Meru and his vision of White Island there, are retold from the *bhakti* perspective of Part B. In the following, I address the history of one of the most important borrowings from the *Nārāyaṇīya* in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature, namely the descriptions of a class of worshipper called ‘Ekāntin’. Here too, as we will see, it is the perspective of Part B of the *Nārāyaṇīya* that shapes the religious identities of these “later” Ekāntins. I intend to ask here, in particular, what the appropriation of the idea of the Ekāntins in these scriptural works can tell us about the religious identities of the authors who take up the term, and the worshippers to whom it is applied. As in the last chapter, I begin by focussing on the employment of the word *ekānta*.

In the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), the term *ekānta* is most frequently employed alongside the adjective *nirjana* or *vijana* (“deserted”) to refer to a secluded or solitary place which is to be inhabited by the *sādhaka* who aspires to achieve mastery of a mantra (*mantrasiddhi*).<sup>350</sup> Elsewhere in the JS, we also find the term used in the sense of a “single aim” (3.18b), and in the adverbial sense of “absolutely”, as in the following instance: “Absolutely flawless knowledge, free from all limitations, arises

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<sup>349</sup> This is the *Skandapurāṇa* published by the Venkateśvara Press in 1910.

<sup>350</sup> See e.g. JS 17.19c, 19.2a, 26.116b, 27.72c, 29.129b and 31.40c. On the concept *mantrasiddhi* see Rastelli (2000). In the same article Rastelli (ibid: 343) makes the important point that “the *sādhaka* does not live in seclusion in order to renounce the world but in order to gain powers to rule over it”.



gradually for one who is yoked through the repeated practice of yoga”.<sup>351</sup> It is striking that in the JS as well as in other scriptural works, the term *ekānta* is overwhelmingly found, even when it carries an apparently “neutral” meaning as in the verse just quoted, within contexts which are primarily concerned with the recitation of mantras (*japa*), or with meditation (*dhyāna*), asceticism or yoga. In this respect, one cannot fail to be reminded of the use of *ekānta* in the *Mahābhārata* (MBh), and especially in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*. Most commonly in the JS the term occurs within the context of prescriptions for the repetition of mantras (*japa*), but it is also linked contextually with meditation (or “visualisation”, *dhyāna*, e.g. 10.2c, 31.40c) and with asceticism (27.72c).

Elsewhere among the scriptural works, the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS) and the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT) both use the word *ekānta* on a number of occasions, and in contexts consistent with its use in the MBh and the JS. In the ParS, for instance, we read as follows: “Having first restrained the senses via non-attachment, he whose attention is firm should steadily fix his mind upon the lord of the gods, his resolve one-pointed (*ekāntaniścayaḥ*).”<sup>352</sup> “He should practise yoga”, the passage continues, “by which the god of gods is pleased” (ParS 10.24: *yogaṃ samabhyaset tena devadevaḥ prasīdati*). A few verses later, it is said that the activity of the mind (*cittavṛtti*) should be brought under control “in a solitary place” (*ekānte*).<sup>353</sup> Similar instructions for the practice of *japa* and meditation are found elsewhere in the ParS (e.g. 10.71, 11.24ab, 17.42cd, 27.35ab, 30.67cd). In the opening chapter of the LT, meanwhile, Śakra (Indra) is described as having attained the state of *ekānta* (*ekāntabhāva*, LT 1.54a) shortly after his ascetic practices directed towards Lakṣmī have been enumerated.<sup>354</sup> Lakṣmī, in response, tells him “I am pleased by your very

<sup>351</sup> JS 5.2: *sarvopādhivinirmuktaṃ jñānam ekāntanirmalam / utpadyate hi yuktasya yogābhyāsāt krameṇa tat //*.

<sup>352</sup> ParS 10.22: *vairāgyeṇendriyāṇy ādau nigṛhya dṛḍhamānasaḥ / samaṃ dadhūta deveṣe cittam ekāntaniścayaḥ //*.

<sup>353</sup> ParS 10.31: *upakramair bahutaraiś cittavṛttiṃ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ / ānayed vaśam ekānte tvarayā na kadācana //*.

<sup>354</sup> LT 1.49-50: *tatra divyaṃ tapas tepe bilyamūlaniketanaḥ / ekapādasthito maunī kṣāṇabhūto ’nilāśanaḥ // ūrdhvaḍṛgbāhuvaktraś ca niyato niyatātmavān / divyaṃ varṣasahasraṃ vai tapas tepe suduścaram //*. – “There, his home at the base of a Bel tree, he practised divine asceticism. Standing completely motionless on one leg, silent, subsisting on the air alone, his face and arms raised to the sky, restrained, self-controlled, he practised very severe asceticism for a thousand divine years.”

strict asceticism” (*prasannāsmi tapasā tava suvrata*, 1.55ab), and she grants him a request, the consequence of which is the teaching which comprises the remainder of the text. Later in the LT, the term *ekānta* is used to refer to a “solitary place” which is suitable for the performance of *japa* (47.11ab), and to the “solitary life” (*ekāntaśīla*) appropriate to one who is devoted to the visualisation (*dhyāna*) and recitation (*japa*) of the *jayāmantra* (48.11-13).

Another example of the use of *ekānta* in the context of *japa* and *dhyāna* can be found in the opening verses of the final chapter of the *Viṣṇusamhitā* (ViṣṇuS). Here, we are introduced to the supreme Bhāgavata yoga, the highest good which has never before been heard by others.<sup>355</sup> The passage reads as follows:

*yuktāhāravihāras tu yuktaceṣṭaḥ samāhitaḥ / yogaṁ bhāgavataṁ nityam  
abhyasen niyatātmavān // pañcakālavibhāgajñō mitabhāṣī mitāśanaḥ /  
kāmakrodhādijid bhaktaḥ samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ // samayācārasamyukto  
japadhyānaparāyaṇaḥ / ekānte vijane sthāne nivāte śabdavarjite // baddhvā  
yogāsanaṁ maunī yogaṁ yuñjīta yogavit /* - “His diet and lifestyle moderate,  
his movements curbed, concentrated, he [the devotee], disciplined and  
composed, should always practise the Bhāgavata yoga. Knowing the divisions of  
the five times, measured in his speech and diet, conquering desire and anger and  
so forth, the devotee [for whom] a lump of earth, a rock and gold are all the  
same, is wholly intent upon the recitation [of mantras] (*japa*) and meditation  
upon god (*dhyāna*), in accordance with established practice. Having assumed the  
yoga posture in a solitary (*ekānte*), deserted (*vijane*) place that is safe and quiet,  
the knower of yoga, remaining silent, should practise yoga.” (ViṣṇuS 30.2-5b)

Each of the scriptural works mentioned thus far in this section – the JS, the ParS, the LT and the ViṣṇuS – also contain descriptions of Ekāntins, or in the case of the ViṣṇuS, of Ekāntikas. In the ParS, these descriptions occur during the first and final chapters, both of which, as we have seen, have been identified by Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003) as having been added to the older “ritualistic corpus” of the text by later redactors. The descriptions in question (ParS 1.17-24 and 31.1-43) are

<sup>355</sup> ViṣṇuS 30.1: *atha vakṣyāmi samkṣepād yogaṁ bhāgavataṁ param / yad anyair aśrutaṁ pūrvaṁ  
hitānāṁ paramaṁ hitam //* The second half-śloka finds a parallel at ParS 30.4cd, and indeed the 30<sup>th</sup>  
chapter of the ViṣṇuS shares a number of parallel verses with the 30<sup>th</sup> chapter of the ParS. The latter is  
also concerned with the practice of yoga within a *bhakti* framework which emphasises god’s kindness  
(*anugraha*, *prasāda*). See e.g. ViṣṇuS 30.5ab ↔ ParS 30.6cd; ViṣṇuS 30.7cd ↔ ParS 30.11cd;  
ViṣṇuS 30.8c-13 ↔ ParS 30.14-18; ViṣṇuS 30.27-29b ↔ ParS 30.75-77b; ViṣṇuS 30.33c-36 ↔ ParS  
30.93-96b; ViṣṇuS 30.39-42a ↔ ParS 30.100c-104a.

contained in passages which explicitly invoke the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Accordingly, the Ekāntins are described here in ways which echo accounts in the earlier text: they are “perfected beings” (*siddhāḥ*, ParS 1.22c, 31.13b-18a; cf. MBh 12.326.19a) wholly devoted to meditating only on the Supreme Person (*puruṣottamam evaikam dhyāyantas tatparāyaṇāḥ*, ParS 1.23cd). They are beyond dualities and without possessions (*nīrdvandvā niṣparigrahāḥ*, ParS 1.24b; cf. MBh 12.326.42b). They have subdued their sense faculties and are always engaged in meditation (*paripakvakaṣāyāś ca sarvadā dhyānatatparāḥ*, ParS 1.24cd).<sup>356</sup> They live on White Island (*śvetadvīpa*, ParS 31.4c, 11), the “abode of yogins” (ParS 1.17d-18b), are “illustrious” (*mahābhāgāḥ*, ParS 31.4a; cf. MBh 12.326.19a), and are “intensely concentrated” (*susamāhitāḥ*, ParS 31.29d; cf. MBh 12.326.116d).

The description of Ekāntins in the LT (17.9-20) also contains echoes of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, as well as of another passage in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, even if it does not invoke the earlier text as explicitly as the ParS.<sup>357</sup> There is no mention here, for example, of White Island. The LT equates Ekāntins with “perfected beings” (*siddhāḥ*, LT 17.10-11) who know thoroughly Veda and Vedānta (LT 17.10b), who are Sāṃkhyas learned in “enumerative knowledge” (*sāṃkhyā* or *sāṃkhyāna*, LT 17.11cd; cf. MBh 12.294.30cd), whose senses are withdrawn, who are conversant with the meditative techniques of fixing the mind (*dhāraṇā*) and visualisation (*dhyāna*), and who are concentrated (*samāhita*) Yogas (LT 17.12).<sup>358</sup> They persist “without food” (*anāhārāḥ*), are “illustrious” (*mahābhāgāḥ*), and they constantly behold Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa (LT 17.16c-17b).

In these passages from the ParS and the LT, the term *ekāntin* is used, as it is in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, to refer to the most accomplished worshippers, those who are uniquely capable of attaining the highest goal. The Ekāntins here are the perfect devotees, and as such, they are not intended to represent a specific “group” among the audience of these texts. Rather, the designation *ekāntin* represents an ideal, and

<sup>356</sup> ParS 1.24: *ekāntino mudā yuktā nīrdvandvā niṣparigrahāḥ / paripakvakaṣāyāś ca sarvadā dhyānatatparāḥ* //

<sup>357</sup> On the interpolated passage LT 41.67-78, which applies the honorific *paramaikāntin* to 800 sages (*muni*) learned in the Kāṇva and Mādhyandina schools, see Rastelli (2006: 233-236).

<sup>358</sup> This use of the terms *sāṃkhyā* and *yoga* as plural nouns referring to adherents of the “schools” Sāṃkhyā and Yoga is also found in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, see Fitzgerald (*forthcoming*).

one whose contours have been drawn already in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. In this sense these passages differ from those in the JS and the ViṣṇuS which, as we have seen in Chapter Two, use the terms *ekāntin* and *ekāntika* to designate one particular group of Vaiṣṇavas among others. In the JS, the Ekāntin is named as one of five distinct types of Vaiṣṇava, all of whom are “born into this great lineage of those devoted only to Nārāyaṇa” (*nārāyaṇaikaniṣṭhānām ye ’smin jātā mahākule*, JS 22.4cd). Each of the five, named in JS 22 (6-19b) as Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānasa, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin, are said to observe the duties of the five times (*pañcakāla*, 22.3b). The same five types of Vaiṣṇava are listed together in the previous chapter (JS 21.78-81) as recipients of gifts at the end of the festival of the purifying threads (*pavitrotsava*).

In the description in JS 22, the Ekāntin is characterised as wandering, begging alms from Brahmins (literally “from those devoted to the six duties”), being respected or treated hospitably (*satkṛta*, by Brahmins?), being without possessions, worshipping god in accordance with the eight-limbed method, living alone with a pupil possessed of good qualities, being intent upon contemplation, and being a qualified Vaiṣṇava by virtue of his place in an order of succession (*kulakrama*) (i.e. rather than, presumably, via initiation).<sup>359</sup> In the ViṣṇuS, as we have seen in Chapter Two, the Ekāntika is named as one of five Pañcarātra lineages (*gocara*) alongside the Vaikhānasa, Sāttvata, Śikhin, and Mūlaka. The Ekāntika is described here as subsisting on begged alms, as serving the twice-born classes, and as worshipping god once a day.<sup>360</sup> According to the *Hārīṇī*, the commentary on the ViṣṇuS authored by Nārāyaṇa, a Nambūtiri Brahmin (Unni 1991: 12-13) who most likely lived in the

<sup>359</sup> JS 22.11-13b: *bhrāntvā bhikṣām* (corr. *mikṣām*) *ca ṣaṭkarmaniratebhyas tu satkṛtām / aparigrahavān yo vai tayā saṃpūjayet prabhum // pumān goptāram avyaktam aṣṭāṅgavidhinā mahat / guṇinā saha śiṣyena vasaty eko vicāradhīḥ // kulakrameṇādhikārī sa ekāntīha vaiṣṇavaḥ /*. The “eight-limbed method” is described at JS 22.75c-80b as consisting of 1.) approaching god (*abhiḡamana*); 2.) worshipping with *arghya* and flowers etc. (*bhoga*); 3.) worshipping with honey, clarified butter, oil, sour milk (*dadhi*), or with an animal; 4.) worshipping with food (22.78b: *annena pūjanam* corr. *antena pūjanam* after Rastelli 2000a: 107 n. 24); 5.) the giving away of food which has been used in worship (*saṃpradāna*); 6.) the fire offering (*vahnisaṃtarpana*); 7.) the offering to ancestors (*pitṛyāga*); and 8.) the final sacrifice (*anuyāga*), namely the offering of food into the internal fires which are one’s breaths (*prāṇāgnihavana*).

<sup>360</sup> ViṣṇuS 2.32c-33b: *śuśrūṣaṇaṃ dvijātīnāṃ bhaikṣavṛttīyā ca vartanam // sakṛc cārādhanam yeṣāṃ te tathaikāntikāḥ smṛtāḥ /*.

fifteenth or sixteenth century,<sup>361</sup> the Ekāntikas are Śūdras, and theirs is the lowest of the five lineages (Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2010: 228-236). Although the ViṣṇuS itself does not explicitly make these claims, it appears to suggest the same by characterising Ekāntikas as serving the twice-born, while associating the Sāttvatas and Śikhins with, respectively, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas.<sup>362</sup>

What can we learn from these short descriptions of the Ekāntin and the Ekāntika in the JS and the ViṣṇuS? First of all, it should be noted that the two accounts may have been composed several centuries apart, though as we have seen, the passages in the JS which mention Ekāntins (JS 20.265-270, 21.78-81, 22.1ff) are unlikely to belong to the oldest portions of this text, since they list the Ekāntins alongside Vaikhānasas, who appear to have been restricted to South India in pre-modern times. This suggests that these passages were themselves composed and added to the JS in the south. In theory, then, the interval between the composition of the accounts in the JS and ViṣṇuS may be considerably shorter than might otherwise be assumed, given that the composition of the JS is normally assigned *en bloc* to North India or the upper Deccan during the ninth century. At any rate, the continuities between the JS's Ekāntin and the ViṣṇuS's Ekāntika are clear to see. Both are depicted as renunciants who support themselves by means of begging, and both accounts present the Ekāntin/Ekāntika as one of five named Vaiṣṇava lineages or groups alongside the Vaikhānasa, the Śikhin and the Karmasāttvata or Sāttvata. With regard to the names of these other Vaiṣṇavas, the obvious discrepancy is between the JS's *yati* and the ViṣṇuS's *mūlaka*. It is notable, however, that these descriptions of the Yati and the Mūlaka contain some striking similarities: both

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<sup>361</sup> Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz has kindly informed me by email (dated 10/12/2011) that in his introduction to *The Tantrasamuccaya of Nārāyaṇa with the Commentary Vimarśinī of Śaṅkara* (ed. T. Ganapati Śāstrī, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1989), N. P. Unni identifies the author of the *Hārīṇī* as a pupil of Śaṅkara, the fifteenth century commentator on the *Tantrasamuccaya*.

<sup>362</sup> See ViṣṇuS 2.30ab, where Sāttvatas are said to support their families by means of livelihoods consonant with the Kṣatriya class (*kṣatrayvṛtyopapannena kuṭumbasya ca poṣaṇam*), and 2.31c where Śikhins are said to support themselves by means of agriculture, trade and breeding cattle (*kṛṣivāṇijyagorakṣā*).

receive means by which to live “without asking” (*āyacita*, JS 22.9b and ViṣṇuS 2.34c), and both worship god in thought, word and deed.<sup>363</sup>

Indeed, there are a number of similarities between the fivefold classifications found in the JS and the ViṣṇuS, while the differences between the two accounts are equally illuminating. As stated above, in the ViṣṇuS the Ekāntikas are said to serve the twice-born, while the Sāttvatas are presented as Kṣatriyas, and the Śikhins as Vaiśyas. The *Hārīṇī* commentary, meanwhile, identifies both the Vaikhānasas and the Mūlakas as Brahmins (Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2010: 232, 234). Although the ViṣṇuS itself does not make this connection, it does describe the Vaikhānasas and Mūlakas in similar terms – both are said to support themselves “by unsolicited means” (*ayācitopapannena*, ViṣṇuS 2.28c, 34c). While it is not emphatic or indeed very clearly expressed, there is, at any rate, clearly a hierarchy at work in the ViṣṇuS’s fivefold classification, and the Ekāntikas, servants of the twice-born, are at the bottom of this hierarchy. Their lowly position here brings to mind the sectarianism which characterised certain South Indian Pāñcarātra contexts. Of course, within such contexts, it should not greatly surprise us that the ViṣṇuS should accord a low status to the Ekāntika for, as we have seen, the authors of this work clearly located themselves within a Pāñcarātra tradition which they considered to be “based on” or “rooted in” the Veda. Such traditions commonly distinguished themselves from those Pāñcarātrikas that appropriated the name ‘Ekāntin’ and called their own tradition the Āgamasiddhānta or Ekāyana. Whether the ViṣṇuS was itself composed in such a sectarian context is, however, rather difficult to affirm. It does not appear to associate itself with any one of the five Vaiṣṇava lineages, despite its avowal that one of the ways in which the lineages are distinguished from one another is the fact that they have different texts (*pāṭhaviśeṣa*, ViṣṇuS 2.23a). Nor does it include polemic against other Pāñcarātra groups. But we can hypothesise that its depiction of the Ekāntika may at least contain echoes of an earlier (or perhaps of a geographically distant) sectarian animosity.

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<sup>363</sup> See JS 22.8ab: *karmaṇā manasā vācā yajanty ekam adhokṣajam*; and ViṣṇuS 2.34ab: *arcanam devadevasya manovākkāyakarmabhiḥ*.

How does the account in the JS compare? Like the ViṣṇuS, the JS incorporates membership of social class (*varṇa*) into its fivefold classification. According to its presentation, the Yatis (22.10c), Vaikhānasas (22.13c), Karmasāttvatas (22.16d) and Śikhins (22.18b) are all Brahmins, while the Ekāntins are not explicitly linked with any *varṇa*. Why should the author of this section of the JS make a point of identifying these other groups as Brahmins while saying nothing about the social class of Ekāntins? Of course, it may not have been the author's intention to convey anything by this omission. However, when this is read alongside the ViṣṇuS's account, it seems to suggest that in the presumably South Indian context in which these verses were written, the Vaiṣṇavas who called themselves Ekāntin were not always considered by others to be Brahmins, or even members of the twice-born classes. Might these be the Pāñcarātrikas who are identified as "non-Brahmins" by Yāmuna's opponents in the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (e.g. ĀP 11.5ff)? This cannot be answered with any confidence, but perhaps the author of these verses in the JS was aware of a controversy regarding the social status of these 'Ekāntins', and therefore decided to omit any reference to it. This is speculative, but we should note, at any rate, that the JS's account of the Ekāntins is substantially more positive than that found in the ViṣṇuS. Where the latter has the Ekāntikas serving the twice-born (which would presumably include the other named Vaiṣṇava lineages), in the JS the Ekāntins are respected renunciants who receive alms from Brahmins. We might construe these contrasting descriptions in the JS and the ViṣṇuS as themselves different interpretations of the Ekāntins' apparent non-inclusion among the three highest classes: while the ViṣṇuS regards them as Śūdras, the authors of this section of the JS may consider them to exist outside of the *varṇa* system altogether. At the least, it seems safe to conclude that despite their differing views on the status of the Ekāntin or Ekāntika, neither the JS's nor the ViṣṇuS's accounts were authored by people who identified themselves as Ekāntin or Ekāntika.

It is precisely to the self-identifying Ekāntins in South India that I now turn. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the Āgamasiddhāntin or Ekāyana authors who contributed towards the composition of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS), the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (PārS) and the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS) also called themselves

Ekāntins and, in reference to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, their religion the *ekāntidharma* (PārS 1.60a, ĪS 1.30c; cf. MBh 12.336.57a). They also, it should be noted, identified themselves as Brahmins (e.g. PauṣS 36.260c, 38.293c-294, PārS 13.56ab, 15.160ab, ĪS 18.230b). For these authors, the term *ekāntin* appears to denote both the “single goal” of liberation *and* monotheism (see especially PauṣS 36.259c-263b). Although, as we have seen, neither of these characteristics feature in the descriptions of Ekāntins and Ekāntikas in the JS and the ViṣṇuS, for Ekāntin authors they are two of the attributes which most crucially set them apart from non-Ekāntin Pāñcarātrikas (PauṣS 36.259c-263b, PārS 1.17b, 33cd, ĪS 1.22cd, 21.515cd). Among demonstrably South Indian texts, Yāmuna’s ĀP contains one of the earliest uses of the term *ekāntin* in reference to the Pāñcarātra. It is used in the sense of monotheism, here applied to Pāñcarātrikas in general, in order to distinguish them from “ordinary” (i.e. Smārta) Brahmins with their own “insignificant little gods”.<sup>364</sup> We find an echo of this at PauṣS 36.261-263b, which I have quoted earlier, where Ekāntins are said to worship no god other than Vāsudeva, in contrast to Pāñcarātrika Brahmins that are mixed worshippers (*vyāmiśrayājīn*), who worship a multitude of inferior deities. On several occasions the PauṣS also juxtaposes the Ekāntins with devotees who desire worldly fruits. However, as we will see in the following section, a few scriptural passages indicate that the boundaries between the self-proclaimed ‘Ekāntins’ and the other Pāñcarātrikas became less clear over time.

## ii.) *Becoming Ekāntin in South India*

It is clear that, from the time of the composition of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the word *ekāntin* has been used as a general term of commendation, as a means of conferring authority and expertise upon deserving persons, whether real or imagined. As we have seen in

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<sup>364</sup> ĀP 142.16-17: *yadi paraṃ te paramapuruṣaṃ evāśritā ekāntinaḥ, anye kṣudradaivatakāḥ sādharmaṇā iti* /. See also the SanS (*Ṛṣirātra* 3.111cd), where *ekāntacintanā* is explained as “never thinking of another god” (*deve nānyacintā kadācana*). As we have seen, the SanS is quoted by Yāmuna, and so predates him.



several examples above, when the term is used in this “informal”, non-specific way, the passage in which it appears will often allude, either directly or indirectly, to the *Nārāyaṇīya*. The JS’s and the ViṣṇuS’s accounts of Ekāntins and Ekāntikas are different. They purport to offer factual descriptions of a particular class of Vaiṣṇava, and presumably because their primary aim is to describe rather than to praise, they make no appeals to the authority of the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Indeed, although the Ekāntin/Ekāntika depicted in these works is a renunciant, there is little to suggest that he is the same figure that we encounter in the *Śāntiparvan*. Contrarily, as we might expect, when *ekāntin* is used in this specifically descriptive or taxonomic sense but as a term of *self*-description, it suits the purposes of the authors to refer to the *Nārāyaṇīya* quite frequently, as is demonstrated especially in the opening chapters of the PārS and ĪS.

It is not always easy to determine whether *ekāntin* is being used as a general term of commendation or as a proper name labelling a specific religious identity. Āgamasiddhānta or Ekāyana scriptural sources, whose authors likely called themselves Ekāntin, on certain occasions also use the term in the former sense. Thus, when we read in the ĪS of “those illustrious Ekāntins, headed by Śaṭhakopa, who have descended to the earth in order to restore mankind”,<sup>365</sup> it is obvious that *ekāntin* is being used here as a straightforward honorific. The author is taking a term of commendation from his own religious culture and applying it retrospectively to a figure from the rather distant past, in this instance the famous ninth-tenth century Tamil devotional poet better known as Nammālvār. Although this affords us an insight into the esteem in which Nammālvār was held in certain Pāñcarātrika circles perhaps nearly half a millennium after his death, I do not consider this to be an especially significant use of the word *ekāntin*. Similar examples may be found elsewhere. Sometimes, inevitably, the application of the term is rather more ambiguous. In these verses from the NārS, for instance, *ekāntin* is also seemingly being used as a general term of commendation, but the fact that it associates Ekāntins

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<sup>365</sup> ĪS 8.175c-176b: *ekāntino mahābhāgāḥ śaṭhakopapuraḥsarāḥ // kṣaṇyāṃ kṛtāvatārā ye lokojjīvanahetunā ।*

with supernatural powers and “worldly” desires makes it rather more striking, as does its suggestion that one may become an Ekāntin quite easily:

*dvādaśyāṃ caivam eva hi // pāraṇaṃ yaḥ prakurvīta dīkṣitair vaiṣṇavaiḥ saha  
/ sa bhaved bhaktimān viṣṇau tathaikāntitvam āpnuyāt // kaivalyaṃ cāpnuyāt  
paścāt nātra kāryā vicāraṇā / aṇimādiguṇān vāpi kāmṣṭān aihikāṃs tu vā //*  
– “Whoever should break the fast along with initiated Vaiṣṇavas on the twelfth day [of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa], he is truly devoted to Viṣṇu and can therefore attain the status of an Ekāntin. And then he can attain perfect isolation (*kaivalya*), or else the supernatural powers such as miniaturisation etc.,<sup>366</sup> or indeed [whatever] worldly gains are desired. With regard to this matter, there need be no inquiry (i.e. it is clear).” (NārS 24.53d-55)

It is difficult to know whether to attach any significance to the use of the word *ekāntin* in this passage, though it seems unlikely that it is being used to refer to one particular group of Pāñcarātrikas.<sup>367</sup> In the following I address a few passages from scriptural sources which I believe can tell us something interesting and significant about the particular group of South Indian Pāñcarātrikas who called themselves Ekāntins (and Āgamasiddhāntins and Ekāyanas). As we have seen, these Pāñcarātrikas present themselves as continuous with the Ekāntins of the *Nārāyaṇīya*. They identify their own ‘Veda’, the Ekāyanaveda, with the teaching given to Nārada in that work, and they characterise themselves as not “desiring” the fruits of their worship (*niṣkāma*, *aphalārthin*, *nirāśīḥkarma* etc. See e.g. MBh 12.328.30f, 336.29d, PauṣS 31.286ab, PārS 1.35d, 25.55d). Moreover, as in the following verse from the PauṣS (31.149c-150), which I have quoted already in Chapter Two, they positively condemn the practice of worshipping god as a means of satisfying desires: “The omniscient abiding in the heart does not permit [worship that is performed with] desire. One who grants heaven to his devotees even when it is not asked for – what is it that is not given by him? Therefore, one should abandon requests!”

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<sup>366</sup> This is a reference to the eight classical *siddhis* alluded to at *Yogasūtra* 3.45, and elaborated in the commentaries. Here, as elsewhere in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās (e.g. JS 6.70c, SS 18.165ab), the word *guṇa* is used instead of *siddhi*. This practice is also quite common in the Śaiva scriptural literature (Mallinson 2011: 330 n. 16).

<sup>367</sup> Elsewhere in the NārS, the word appears to be used merely as a general term of commendation. At NārS 25.388, for example, the Ekāntins are named as “the most excellent Bhāgavatas” (*bhāgavatottamāḥ*).

However, inevitably the South Indian Pāñcarātrika ‘Ekāntins’ had to adapt to a religious environment which was substantially different from that which formed the background to the *Nārāyaṇīya*. For example, the yogic and ascetic frames of reference by means of which the identity of the Ekāntins was originally established had to be radically reinterpreted in order to remain applicable in these different circumstances. Of course, this process is encountered already in the later chapters of the *Nārāyaṇīya* itself, wherein “renunciation” is reinterpreted, as it is in the *Bhagavadgītā*, to mean the renunciation of actions motivated by desire. This understanding of renunciation is found also in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, as we will see in the following chapter. But the textual evidence suggests that South Indian Ekāntins also had to adapt to changing circumstances *in South India*. For example, there are indications, as demonstrated in this passage from the PauṣS, that they came to modify their position on worship undertaken in order to fulfill personal desires:

*phalamūlānnapraṭiṣṭhāṃ śṛṇu vakṣye phalārthinām / nānnadānāt paraṃ  
dānaṃ triṣu lokeṣu vidyate // sadyahprītikaraṃ hr̥dyaṃ prāṇadaṃ prāṇinām  
api / utpattāv api saṃskāre rasam annasya kīrtitam // annād bhavanti bhūtāni  
tasmāt sarvaṃ praṭiṣṭhitam / tac ca praṭiṣṭhitam yena tena sarvaṃ praṭiṣṭhitam  
// putradāradhanair annair vṛddhiṃ yāti kṣaṇāt kṣaṇam / prāpnoti paramām  
pūjām utkṛṣṭebhyo mahattarām // hr̥ṣṭaḥ puṣṭas tato bhūtvā tṛpto bhavati  
sarvadā / bhuktvā bhogān suvipulān ante nārāyaṇālayam // yāti  
candrapratikāśair vimānair devanirmिताiḥ / svargādau sarvaloke tu sthitvā  
kalpaśatān bahūn // kālāt punar ihāyāti deśe sarvottame śubhe / satām kule  
samāsādyā janma jāty uttamaṃ mahat // jāyate rūpavān vāggmī  
vidyājñānaparāyaṇaḥ / dviśatām api sarveṣāṃ pūjyaḥ priyataras sadā //  
śīlavān śauryasampanno dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ / dvijadevaparo nityaṃ dātā  
bhūtahite rataḥ // ekāntī dharmavettā vai nārāyaṇaparāyaṇaḥ / trivargam  
akhilam bhuktvā yathābhimatalakṣaṇaḥ // janma(ā)bhyas taṃ śubhaṃ karma  
kṛtvānantagaṇaṃ punaḥ / jñānam āśādyate yena prayāti paramaṃ padam //* –

“Listen! I will explain the dedication (or consecration) of fruits, roots and [other] foods for those who desire the fruits [of worship, *phalārthin*]. In the three worlds there is no gift better than the gift of food. It immediately gives pleasure, [and] is appetising and restorative to beings. Even at the stage of preparation and dressing the tastiness of food is well-known! [All] living beings come into being from food. From that everything is founded, and by one who has dedicated that, by him everything is founded. As long as he lives in this world, [and] in the heavenly world called Brahma[loka], he [who dedicates food] may live without sickness and pain. By means of [donating] food, he reaches lasting prosperity, with sons, wives and wealth. He receives the greatest honour from eminent elders. The gods, seers and perfected beings always consider carefully the highest welfare for him, together with increased longevity. Thus, being joyful

and well-nourished, he is ever satisfied. Enjoying numerous pleasures, at death he goes to the abode of Nārāyaṇa by means of moon-like chariots made by the gods. Abiding in all worlds, beginning with heaven, for many hundreds of Kalpas, in the course of time he comes here again, to a supremely auspicious place. Achieving a birth in a respectable family, the most excellent birth, he is born with handsome form, eloquent, devoted to learning and knowledge. Ever more beloved, he is revered by all, even his enemies. Possessed of good character, might, constancy and strength, a donor (*dātr*) is always best among Brahmins, intent upon the welfare of beings. [He is] an Ekāntin, a knower of *dharma*, wholly devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Thoroughly enjoying the group of three (i.e. the three *puruṣārthas*), possessed of the desired qualities, endlessly acting righteously through [numerous] lifetimes, knowledge is reached, by which he advances to the supreme abode.” (PauṣS 41.143-155)

There is no doubt that this passage has been inserted into the PauṣS, for the redactor responsible has made no effort to disguise the fact – the next verses follow on from those which precede this excerpt. Needless to say, the relevant idea expressed here, i.e. that one can become an Ekāntin by means of making a donation to a temple, represents a radically different view of the Ekāntins from any we have encountered thus far. We are a long way here from the idealised depiction of the yogic-ascetic Ekāntins in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and in later scriptural works such as the ParS and the LT. The fact that these verses are addressed to worshippers who desire fruits (*phalārthin*) only serves to emphasise the dramatic nature of this shift in attitude, for elsewhere in the PauṣS, as we have seen, such worshippers are openly condemned.

My reason for proposing that this passage has been authored by a self-identifying Ekāntin, and that the term *ekāntin* is thus significant in this context, is that the donor is promised a *rebirth* as an Ekāntin, a reward which is hardly likely to have been offered by a non-Ekāntin Pāñcarātrika, for whom the initiation rite (*dīkṣā*) establishes the candidate’s eligibility to join Viṣṇu in his “supreme abode” (see e.g. PādS cp 21.15, LT 41.5c-6, ŚrīprśS 16.18c-19). As we have seen, according to several sources the Ekāyana or Āgamasiddhānta is a tradition that one is born into, rather than one which is joined through initiation, so the promise of a rebirth as an Ekāntin is, at least “officially”, the best offer that can be made to non-Āgamasiddhāntins. Elsewhere in the PauṣS we find similar expressions of the same idea. For instance, in a passage concerning the festival centred around the investiture

of god's icon with the sacred thread (*pavitṛāropana*), it is said that a man (*nara*) who makes unending donations of cattle, land and gold (*gobhūsuvarṇa*) on a daily basis (*pratyaha*) for as long as he lives, will attain the fruit (*phala*) of these donations "during a maximum lifespan" (*paramāyusi*), and will then journey to heaven (*diva*) "by means of moon-like carriages" (*yānaiś candrapratīkāśaiḥ*) (PauṣS 30.174c-177). Born again into an auspicious family, he will become devoted to Nārāyaṇa in thought, word and deed (*karmaṇā manasā vācā nārāyaṇaparo bhavet*, PauṣS 30.180cd), will live a long life free of sickness and sorrow (*vyādhiśokavinirmukta*), with sons and wives etc. (*putradārādika*), and then will go to White Island (*śvetadvīpa*), where he will achieve identification with the supreme *brahman* (*param brahmatvam āyāti*) (PauṣS 30.178c-184b). Although there is no explicitly "sectarian" terminology employed in these verses, it is fairly certain that it has been authored by an Ekāyana or 'Ekāntin' for the same reasons I have put forward with regard to the passage regarding the donation of food: a worshipper who desires the "fruit" of worship cannot attain liberation in this lifetime. The best he can hope for in this regard is an auspicious rebirth as one who is completely devoted ("in thought, word and deed") to Nārāyaṇa. Only then may he go to White Island.

In another passage of the PauṣS which conveys the same idea, the sectarian identity of the author is even more explicit. In this passage it is said that providing the "mixed worshipper" (*vyāmiśrayājīn*) has undergone initiation and is completely devoted to Nārāyaṇa, to rituals such as mantra-repetition (*japa*) and the fire-sacrifice (*homa*), and to singing hymns of praise (*stuti*), "he can attain the world of Viṣṇu at death and, having obtained a superior rebirth, he may become, from [the time of his] childhood, O best among the twice-born, a Tanmaya, well-versed in the rituals of the Lord, and having him as his highest aim."<sup>368</sup> As we have seen, 'Tanmaya' is yet another name for 'Ekāyana', 'Āgamasiddhāntin' or, in the South Indian context, 'Ekāntin'. These verses just referred to are indubitably the work of an Ekāyana author since they follow on from the passage addressed in previous chapters wherein Ekāyanas are hailed as 'Ekāntins', and mixed worshippers are called "devotees in

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<sup>368</sup> PauṣS 36.265-266b: *dehānte vaiṣṇavaṃ lokaṃ prāpnuyāt punar eva hi / janma cāsādyā cotkṛṣṭam ābālyād dvijasattama // bhagavatkarmaniṣṇātaḥ tatparas tanmayo bhavet //*

appearance only”.<sup>369</sup> The following verse, meanwhile, states that “Not aiming at the fruit [of worship], even in times of distress, he will not attain a rebirth in this world after leaving his body, O Pauṣkara.”<sup>370</sup> The sectarian tenor of this passage as a whole, including its stated opposition to “mixed devotion” (PauṣS 36.259cd) and to worship undertaken in order to achieve a “fruit”, suggests to me that this was an earlier interpolation into the PauṣS than were the passages (i.e. PauṣS 41.143-155 and 30.174c-184b) quoted above on the donation of food, and “cattle, land and gold” to a temple. My reasons for believing this will become clear shortly.

As we seen in Chapter Five, there are a number of passages in the PauṣS which refer to “mixed worshippers” (*vyāmiśrayājīn*). These worshippers are Pāñcarātrikas who do not belong to the Ekāyana tradition. They are described as Brahmins (PauṣS 36.263a), and they are depicted as having expertise in the Vedas (PauṣS 27.711ab, see also SS 2.8cd). They are contrasted on one occasion with Brahmins who are “exclusive” worshippers (*ananyayājīn*, 27.110c), and on another with those who “seek refuge in no other” (*ananyaśaraṇa*, 36.78a). Elsewhere, in the earlier verses of the passage referred to above (PauṣS 36.259c-263b), the mixed worshippers are said to worship the retinue of subordinate deities (*gaṇa*), and they are contrasted here again with “exclusive” worshippers (*nānyayājīn*) who are identified as Ekāyanas and are said to be Ekāntins. In this instance, as has just been restated, the mixed worshippers are denounced as “devotees in appearance only” (*bhaktābhāsāḥ*), and it is said that one should never practise “mixed devotion” (*bhaktisāṅkarya*).

In a later chapter of the PauṣS, Pauṣkara asks God for a clarification with regard to the status of mixed worship, while pointing out that this has been repeatedly prohibited thus far.<sup>371</sup> God replies:

*satyam etan mahābuddhe yathā sañcoditaṃ tvayā // kintu kriyāntare prāpte na  
dośas tv adhikāriṇām / yasmāt sarvaparatvaṃ hi teṣāṃ asty acyutaṃ prati //*

<sup>369</sup> The PārS, which was also authored by Ekāyanas, also promises rebirth as an Ekāyana to non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas who correctly perform their duties. The passage in question (PārS 13.114c-115) has been discussed by Rastelli (2006: 194).

<sup>370</sup> PauṣS 36.266c-267b: *nābhisandhāya ca phalam āpatkālagato 'pi vai // tyaktvā dehaṃ punarjanma nāpnuyād iha pauṣkara /*

<sup>371</sup> PauṣS 38.47-48b: *deva vyāmiśrayājītvam pratiśiddham punaḥ punaḥ / prāguktānām ca yāgānām draṣṭum aṅgīkṛtaṃ ca yat // tanmātrasaṃśayaṃ jātaṃ chettum arhasi sāmpratam /*

*tadāśritatvād devānām anyeṣāṃ pūjanāt tu vai // na doṣo hi yathā loke bhrātṛbhr̥tyagaṇasya ca / mānanād dharmapatnīnām...* // – “This is true, O wise one, just as you have urged. But when this other type of ritual (i.e. “mixed worship”) is valid, then there is no fault for those who are qualified, since for them Acyuta is superior to all. [Therefore] because they are subordinate to him, there is no fault in worshipping other gods, just as in one’s everyday life [there is no fault] in paying honour to a retinue (*gaṇa*) of servants, or to one’s brothers, or to one’s lawful wives”. (PauṣS 38.48c-50c)

What can we deduce from these verses? First of all, they have evidently been added to the PauṣS after the “sectarian” portions which forbid the practice of mixed worship, for they refer directly to these prohibitions. Since these sectarian portions were clearly authored by Ekāyanas, who called themselves Ekāntins and proclaimed themselves superior to mixed worshippers partly on account of their monotheism, we must assume either that a.) these verses were authored by a Pāñcarātrika who was himself a “mixed worshipper” as opposed to an Ekāyana, or that b.) they were authored by an Ekāyana, and therefore provide evidence that some Ekāyanas, at least, changed their attitude towards “mixed worship”. I propose that the second explanation is the correct one, for the passage in which these verses are found, concerned with the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of the image of god (*bhagavadbimba*) in a temple, is clearly the work of an Ekāyana author. This is evident from the fact that the “principal ordinance” (*mukhyakalpam*, PauṣS 38.41b) for the installation is assigned to the knowers of the five times who are “exclusive” devotees (*ananyāḥ*, PauṣS 38.31a), who are devoted to the four Vyūhas and who perform the renunciation of actions (*karmanām api samnyāsaṃ kurvanti*, PauṣS 38.32), while the secondary or “alternative” ordinance (*anukalpa*) is to be performed by initiated twice-born Bhāgavatas who are “established in the *dharma* of the triple Veda” (*trayīdharmasthitaiḥ*, PauṣS 38.41c-42). The former group clearly denotes the Ekāyanas, while the latter are the Pāñcarātrikas who are elsewhere referred to as “mixed worshippers”.

It could be argued that the verses which validate mixed worship were simply appended to this description of the principal and secondary rules for installation by a later redactor who was himself a mixed worshipper. In support of this, it could be pointed out that the PārS (19.299c-340) incorporates the passages PauṣS 38.26c-46

and 51-72b, but crucially not the verses we are presently addressing. Indeed, the omission of these verses in the PārS is interesting. However, in my view such a scenario is unlikely, both on account of the reference in these verses to the repeated prohibition of mixed worship, and because the following verses (i.e. PauṣS 38.51ff), which *have* been incorporated into the PārS, seamlessly continue the discussion. Moreover, the PārS itself attests to there being a certain lack of clarity on the issue of the participation of the Ekāyanas, or ‘Ekāntins’ as they are called here, in a practice which the PauṣS (36.262c-263b) presents as being a key characteristic of “mixed worship”, namely the worship of the subordinate deities (*gaṇa*) of Viṣṇu. The passage reads as follows:

*vāstukṣetreśagaruḍadvārśrīcaṇḍrapracaṇḍrakān // abhyarcyārghyādibhir  
devān prāsādashāṃś ca pūjayet / prāsāde 'tha caturdvāre maṇḍape cetareṣu  
ca // dvāratraye 'tha dhātāraṃ vidhātāraṃ jayaṃ tathā / vijayaṃ cāpi  
bhadraṃ ca subhadraṃ ca ganeśvaram // yad aṅgabhāvam abhyeti  
dvārsthādyaṃ devatāgaṇam / viṣvakṣenāvasānaṃ ca narāṇām alpamedhasām  
// jantor ekāntinas tad vai cittakhedakṛd arcanam / vighnakṛt prakṛtasyāpi  
śiṣyāṇāṃ tadanarcanam // atas tadanukampārthaṃ devabhṛtyadhiyārcanam /  
bhaktiśraddhojjhitam caiva vihitam tv evam eva hi // ... / ... // etāvad arcanāt  
teṣāṃ guror ekāntinas tu vai / syād virodhanirāśas tu yato bhṛtyas tu te hareḥ  
//.* – “After worshipping Vāstu (or ‘Vāstviśa’ i.e. Vāstupuruṣa, the guardian deity of the temple), Kṣetreśa, Garuḍa, Dvārśrī (also known as Dvāralakṣmī), Caṇḍa and Pracaṇḍa with *arghya* and so on, one should worship the temple gods in the temple, and the others in the pavillion at [each of] the four [entrance-]gates. Then, at the three gates [one should worship] Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ, and also Jaya and Vijaya, and Bhadra and Subhadra, and the Lord of the Gaṇas (i.e. Viṣvakṣena). Worship from (i.e. by)<sup>372</sup> a man [who is] an Ekāntin which is directed towards the subordinate class of deities who form God’s retinue, beginning with the gatekeepers and ending with Viṣvakṣena, causes distress to the minds of men who have little understanding. [But] not worshipping them, even if it is done [only] for (or by?) the pupils [of the priest], causes obstacles. Therefore, worship with [one’s] thought [directed upon] the [deities who are the] servants of god is enjoined in order to elicit their compassion, though [it should be done] without devotion and loyalty... Thus, from the worship of these [subordinate deities] by an Ekāntin guru, strife will be cast out, since they are the servants of Hari.” (PārS 6.125c-130, 132c-133b)

<sup>372</sup> The use of the ablative/genitive case here (*jantor ekāntinaḥ*) seems strange. In his commentary on the ĪS, Alaśiṅgabhaṭṭa is unsure of how to interpret this, and one of his suggestions is to take it as an ablative absolutive (*lyablope pañcamī*) – see *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā* on ĪS 4.3. However, this is not convincing.



It is very difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this passage, which is also found in the ĪS.<sup>373</sup> I am unable to satisfactorily translate the verse and half-verse (6.131-132b) I have omitted, though their gist, I believe, is that the subordinate deities “mentally” (*manasā*) accept worship “even if it is given without respect” (*dattam apy avahelayā*), and that because they are (ultimately speaking) “made of Acyuta” (*acyutamayāḥ*), their minds are extensions of his.<sup>374</sup> How are we to interpret the passage in general? It appears to indicate that Ekāntins were being criticised in some quarters for worshipping members of Viṣṇu’s entourage, such as Viṣvaksena, the gatekeepers to the temple, and other temple deities.<sup>375</sup> Presumably, if such criticism genuinely existed, it was based on the notion that worshipping these subordinate deities violated the Ekāntins’ commitment to monotheism. It is to be noted that in his ĀP, Yāmuna also makes the point that the subordinate deities are, like the lord of Viṣṇu’s retinue (i.e. Viṣvaksena), “dependent upon Viṣṇu”.<sup>376</sup> However, Yāmuna does not make this assertion in response to a specific criticism that Pāñcarātrikas worship Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities. Indeed, there is no indication in the ĀP that the Pāñcarātra’s Mīmāṃsaka opponents were critical of this practice, or that they felt that it somehow compromised the ideal of monotheism. If the criticism of the Ekāntin worship of Viṣṇu’s entourage was not coming from orthodox outsiders, then, from where was it coming? This is a very difficult question to answer, but we should not overlook the possibility that such criticism may have come from other Ekāntins. The author’s strategy in the above passage is to legitimate the Ekāntin worship of the subordinate deities by providing scriptural authority for it, but he also attempts to minimise the “distress” that this may cause by emphasising that this worship is, and *should be*, performed without devotion, loyalty, and respect, and that, in any case, the subordinate deities are “made of Acyuta”, and so any charge of abandoning monotheism would not apply.

<sup>373</sup> PārS 6.124c-126b → ĪS 3.100-101; PārS 6.128-133b → ĪS 4.2c-7.

<sup>374</sup> PārS 6.131-132b: *te tat prāṇicyutaṃ prahvā dattam apy avahelayā / grhṇanti manasā śreyaḥ param dhyātvā dhiyā hṛdi // yataḥ sarve 'cyutamayās taccittārpitamānasāḥ /*. Note that ĪS 4.5a reads *te tat pāṇicyutaṃ prahvā*.

<sup>375</sup> On the mythical plane Caṇḍra, Pracāṇḍra, Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ, Jaya, Vijaya, Bhadra and Subhadra are the gatekeepers of Vaikuṇṭha, Viṣṇu’s heaven.

<sup>376</sup> ĀP 168 6-7: *devatāgaṇaḥ // guṇabhūtaḥ śruto viṣṇor viṣṇupāriṣadeśavat /*.

Much of this is hypothetical, but when read in tandem with the PauṣS's legitimation of valid forms of "mixed worship" for those who are qualified, these verses in the PārS and the ĪS do appear to indicate that some Ekāntins (or Ekāyanas etc.) were participating in forms of worship, specifically in temples, that members of their tradition had previously condemned. However, that the Ekāntin worship of Viṣṇu's subordinate deities appears to have attracted controversy is itself rather difficult to explain within the broader history of the Pāñcarātra. For the Pāñcarātrika worship of Viṣṇu's divine retinue is enjoined throughout the scriptural literature, both in its oldest documents, and in South Indian works including the PārS and the ĪS themselves. The worship of Viṣvaksena, for example, is attested to with such frequency throughout the Saṃhitās that I do not need to cite individual instances here. How, then, can we explain the statement that the Ekāntin worship of such deities as Viṣvaksena "causes distress" to some people? If Ekāntins or Ekāyanas had only recently taken on the worship of Viṣvaksena et al., it implies that they had a very minimal role in the composition of the early Saṃhitās, and indeed the remainder of the scriptural corpus. Alternatively, it may be proposed that the "absolute monotheism" which rejected this sort of worship was itself only a recent phenomenon among Pāñcarātrikas, and that it was, then, rather short-lived. In my view, the second explanation is more likely to be correct, for we do not find strictures against mixed worship in the JS, the SS, or the apparently older parts of the PauṣS. It is only in those sections of the PauṣS that were authored by Ekāyanas, which I propose were added to the text in South India, and in the PārS and the ĪS that we find such strictures.

This proposal is also consistent with my hypothesis that the sectarianism which characterised certain South Indian Pāñcarātrika contexts was itself only relatively brief. It was, as I have suggested in Chapter Five, probably within such contexts that the Ekāyanas invented the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda and of the four distinct Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas. If this is correct, it seems reasonable to suggest that the explicit self-identification of the Ekāyanas with the Ekāntins of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and their concomitant "absolute monotheism" also originated during this period, and for similar reasons. Faced with competition for the control of temples and the

performance of rituals for fee-paying clients with other Pāñcarātrikas who claimed association with the Vedic tradition, the Ekāyanas sought to establish their own orthodox credentials. As we have seen in Chapter Five, the Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas had probably always been liberation-seekers (*mumukṣu*) who renounced personal desires (*niṣkāma* etc), and they may have had genuine, albeit very distant, links to the religious culture represented in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. However, it appears to have been only in South India that the Ekāyanas began to explicitly represent themselves as Ekāntins. Admittedly, our information on the Kashmirian Ekāyanas is rather sparse, but there is no indication in the so-called *Samvitprakāśa*, for example, that the Ekāntins represented an important ideal to Vāmanadatta, its Ekāyana author.

### *iii.) Conclusions*

Of the scriptural sources available to me which do not appear to have been authored by sectarian Pāñcarātrikas who called themselves ‘Ekāyana’, the JS, the ViṣṇuS, the ParS and the LT contain the most uses of the terms *ekānta* and *ekāntin*. In the ParS and the LT, the designation *ekāntin* is employed within mythical narratives to name the ideal devotees. In this sense, their use of the term is continuous with that found in the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Contrarily, the JS and the ViṣṇuS use the term to designate one particular class of Vaiṣṇava among others. The sections of the JS which describe Ekāntins are very likely South Indian in origin, as is the ViṣṇuS. The fact that they do not use the word *ekāntin/ekāntika* as a general term of commendation, but as a label for a specific religious identity may indicate that the relevant portions of these texts are later than the ParS and the LT, or that they were authored within a different South Indian context to those works. Both the JS and the ViṣṇuS present the Ekāntins or Ekāntikas as renunciants, and both hint that they do not belong to the twice-born social classes. Unfortunately, their descriptions are very brief, and they do not contain enough information to enable us to affirm that they are describing the Pāñcarātrikas who call themselves Ekāyanas or Āgamasiddhāntins.

The latter Pāñcarātrikas appropriated the name *ekāntin*, and very possibly the ideal of absolute monotheism alongside it. Numerous sections of the PauṣS were authored by Ekāyanas. The PauṣS clearly lacks homogeneity, and there are several clues, some of which I have pointed to in Chapter Five, that significant sections of it were composed in South India. Among these I would provisionally include the more explicitly “sectarian” portions of the text, which can be best explained in relation to the competition among distinct Pāñcarātra traditions for the control of public temples in South India. The other textual sources which most clearly indicate the existence of this religiously (and, inevitably, commercially) competitive environment, such as the PādS and the PārS, are demonstrably South Indian. Moreover, at least some of the passages in the PauṣS which suggest more cooperative relations between distinct Pāñcarātra traditions, including those which I have addressed above, appear to be even later additions to the text. This is evidently the case with the quoted passage authorising mixed worship “for those who are qualified”, and I propose also that the passages which promise a better rebirth to those who make generous donations to the temple (i.e. PauṣS 30.174c-184b, and 41.143-155) can be added to this later layer.

This means that we can provisionally distinguish at least three textual layers in the PauṣS: i.) the early layer/s wherein *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worshippers are addressed as apparent equals, as they are in the SS; ii.) the explicitly sectarian portions wherein, for example, mixed worshippers are denounced as “devotees in appearance only”, and worship motivated by personal desires is either condemned or prohibited; iii.) the later layer containing passages, addressed in this chapter, which indicate a change in attitude regarding mixed worship. A possible fourth layer is represented by the PauṣS’s 42<sup>nd</sup> chapter on the rites for installing a divine image in the temple (*pratiṣṭhā*), as discussed in Chapter Five. Here, Ekāyanas are shown to cooperate with Pāñcarātriaka Brahmins who have expertise in the Vedas. Due to the similarity between the passages in this chapter and those found in the final two chapters of the SS, which appear to have been appended to that work, I consider it very likely that this chapter of the PauṣS is also an interpolation. Like SS 24-25, however, its composition must have preceded that of the PārS, which incorporates many of its verses. It is not clear to me whether the layer represented by PauṣS 42 is

coeval with layer three distinguished above, or whether it might be added between layers one and two.

The apparent Ekāyana appropriation of the religious identity of the Ekāntins of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, with their absolute monotheism, for example, and their absolute renunciation of personal desires, was no doubt limited by a religious environment that was dominated by the priestly performance of temple rituals for fee-paying clients. The passages in the PauṣS which promise rebirth as an Ekāntin to those who make donations to the temple show that, despite their professed ideals, Ekāyanas were active in advertising their ritual expertise to prospective patrons. The verses concerning the endowment of food (i.e. PauṣS 41.143-155) appear to be addressed specifically to royal patrons, since their description of a superior rebirth includes typically Kṣatriya qualities such as valour or might (*śaurya*), constancy or command (*dhṛti*), and power (*utsāha*), as well as a reference to “enemies” (*dviṣatām*). In this sort of competitive environment, and indeed in an increasingly urbanised society, there would have been little place for the ideals of the “original” Ekāntins. The acceptance of worshippers who desire fruits (*phalārthin*) presumably became both a political and an economic necessity.

## 9. The Āgamasiddhānta in the Pāñcarātrarakṣā

### i.) What became of the Āgamasiddhāntins?: A short summary

I have argued in the first three chapters that the idea of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS appears to have emerged, probably no earlier than the twelfth century, within the South Indian Pāñcarātra tradition which called itself the Āgamasiddhānta. This tradition associated itself with the so-called Ekāyanaveda, an apparently mythical Urtext which in reality may have been represented by the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS) and *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS). This is suggested, at least, by the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* (ŚrīprśS 49.471c-473), and by the much later commentator Alāśingabhaṭṭa in his *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā* (on *Īśvarasaṃhitā* 1.64-67). The idea of there being four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas may also have emerged among Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas, since its earliest articulation is probably that found in the PauṣS (38.293-307b), and the majority of extant lists of the four Siddhāntas name the Āgamasiddhānta as the highest of the four.

As we have seen, the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS is also claimed in the ŚrīprśS, and in the interpolated section of the JS entitled *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, both of which were very likely authored by non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas. In addition, several non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptural sources contain the claim that there are four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, though inevitably in these instances the authors place their own tradition, namely the Mantrasiddhānta, at the top of the hierarchy. What is more, the idea of the Ekāyanaveda is itself found in several non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptural sources, such as the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS cp 13.66c-72b), the ŚrīprśS (e.g. 16.20) and the *Śrīpuruṣottamasāṃhitā* (ŚrīpurS 1.12). On these occasions, however, the term ‘Ekāyana’ refers to the Pāñcarātra tradition in general, rather than to the Āgamasiddhānta.

Among the published works available to me, the vast majority were authored by non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas. As I have shown in Chapter Four, the authors

of these works were generally increasingly keen to stress the continuity of their own practices with those legitimated by Brahminical orthodoxy, though at the same time they continued to advertise their ritual expertise to a wider social audience than was acceptable to those who upheld that orthodoxy. Of the works at my disposal, only the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (PārS) and the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS), together with parts of the PauṣS and the SS, were clearly authored by Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas. The parts of the PauṣS and the SS that appear to have been authored by Ekāyanas (the term ‘Āgamasiddhānta’ is not found in these works) were probably added to these texts in South India. Some of these sections of the PauṣS articulate a clearly sectarian agenda, condemning the practices of non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas and even questioning their status as genuine devotees. However, in other interpolated sections of the PauṣS, as we have seen in Chapter Eight, Ekāyana authors appear to sanction these very same practices.

We have here, then, rather a complex history. There are numerous sources, as I have shown in Chapter Two, which indicate that there were always distinct groups within the Pāñcarātra. This is not especially surprising in view of the fact that the *Nārāyaṇīya*, which contains the earliest extant references to a religious tradition called ‘Pāñcarātra’, presents this tradition as, from the outset, a synthesis of previously distinct religious identities and soteriological methods. However, there is no evidence prior to sources such as the PauṣS, the PādS and the PārS, that these distinct groups were in direct competition with one another for the control of temples, and that in consequence of this, were mutually opposed. This happened, I believe, in a relatively “orthodox” South Indian environment wherein those Pāñcarātrikas who could claim association, through membership of a *gotra*, with the Vedic tradition, were at a distinct advantage over those Pāñcarātrikas who could not. As I have argued in Chapter Five, the origin of the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda is probably best explained in reference to this environment.

The Āgamasiddhāntins who associated themselves with the Ekāyanaveda appear to have congregated in relatively small Vaiṣṇava centres such as Śrīraṅgam and Melkote. Based on the relative size of their literary output, we must assume that they represented a minority within the Pāñcarātra. Nonetheless, they appear to have

had a certain authority in the Pāñcarātra tradition. This is evident from the fact that apparently Āgamasiddhāntin ideas, such as the supremacy of the JS, SS, and PauṣS, and the existence of the Ekāyanaveda, found their way into non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptures. It is also evident, as we will see shortly, from the descriptions of the Āgamasiddhānta in Vedāntadeśika's *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* (PRR).

Among the Pāñcarātra scriptural works which probably postdate Vedāntadeśika, only the ĪS, which incorporates a large amount of material from the PārS, seems to have been authored by Āgamasiddhāntins. In many of these late works, the Pāñcarātra is presented as a single system (*tantra*), and there is no mention of the distinct traditions or Siddhāntas. Several of these works, as we have seen in Chapter Three, contain extensive, non-hierarchical lists of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. Thus, it appears that the culture of sectarianism within the Pāñcarātra subsided, and was replaced by one in which the non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas represented the tradition as a single integrated system. What, then, became of the Āgamasiddhāntins? In this short chapter, I address several passages from Vedāntadeśika's PRR which may provide some clues to the answer to this question.

## ii.) *Vedāntadeśika's defence of the Āgamasiddhānta*

While the PārS and the *Kōyiloḷuku*, the Śrīraṅgam temple chronicle, provide ample evidence (see Rastelli 2006: 243-244) that the Ekāyanas were active in Śrīraṅgam in the 12<sup>th</sup> and (probably early) 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is not, to my knowledge, a comparable body of evidence which can demonstrate that they remained active there as late as the early fourteenth century i.e. when Vedāntadeśika composed the PRR and was *ācārya* at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple. However, the PRR itself contains several passages which suggest that this very probably *was* the case. For it is difficult to overlook the fact that in his defence of the Pāñcarātra, Vedāntadeśika lends his support in particular to the Āgamasiddhānta. Thus, in the opening section of the PRR's first chapter, Vedāntadeśika establishes that the Āgamasiddhānta is the



primary Siddhānta. In support of this he quotes (at PRR 6.4ff) PauṣS 38.293c-305, and (at 8.5-8) the *Hayagrīvasaṃhitā* (otherwise known as the *Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra*), both of which list the Āgamasiddhānta at the top of the Siddhānta hierarchy. Subsequently, at PRR 9.8-11, he quotes PādS cp 19.111c-113b, which lists the Mantrasiddhānta as the “first” Siddhānta, but in his succeeding commentary, Vedāntadeśika notes that this is a reversal of the sequence (*vyutkrama*) that is found in the PauṣS, and that this reversal is intended merely as a means of praising the Mantrasiddhānta.<sup>377</sup> In other words, the hierarchy found in the PauṣS is the canonical one. As if to emphasise this, Vedāntadeśika then (falsely!) claims, at PRR 9.13-14, that the PādS itself acknowledges the “superiority” (*atīśayaḥ*) of the Āgamasiddhānta, and that this superiority is conveyed, according to the PādS, by the fact that the Āgamasiddhānta confers liberation alone.

These verses in the PRR are followed by a short quotation of PādS cp 19.117ab: “And in the Āgama [Siddhānta], wherein the renunciation of actions is described...” (*karmaṇām api saṃnyāsaḥ kathyate yatra cāgame*). Vedāntadeśika quotes this half-*śloka* in order to issue an important corrective as to its meaning. The “renunciation of actions” mentioned here refers, in fact, to the renunciation of “actions motivated by desire” (*kāmyakarma*) which is performed in the Āgamasiddhānta, says Vedāntadeśika, in accordance with the teaching of “pure renunciation” (*sāttvikatyāga*) that is propounded in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*.<sup>378</sup> In other words, according to Vedāntadeśika, Āgamasiddhāntins perform rituals relating to their own social class and stage of life etc. (*svavarṇāśramādi*), and also the daily and occasional rites prescribed in the Gr̥hyasūtras of their own *śākhā*, but they renounce what the *Bhagavadgītā* calls the “fruits” of these actions.<sup>379</sup> “Therefore”, concludes Vedāntadeśika, “it should not be

<sup>377</sup> PRR 9.12-13: *atra āgamamantrasiddhāntayoḥ pauṣkaroktakramāt vyutkrameṇopādānaṃ siddhimokṣapradamantrasiddhāntaprāśastye tātparyāt.*

<sup>378</sup> PRR 9.15-17: *atra kāmyakarmaṇāṃ svarūpataḥ saṃnyāsaḥ. svavarṇāśramādiniyatānāṃ tu bhagavadgītāśtādaśādhyāyanirñītaprakāreṇa sāttvikatyāgaḥ. svaśākhāgr̥hyoktamaryādayā ca sarvatra nityanaimittikādipariagrahaḥ.*

<sup>379</sup> See for example MBh 6.40.2: *kāmyānāṃ karmaṇāṃ nyāsaṃ saṃnyāsaṃ kavayo viduḥ / sarvakarmaphalatyāgaṃ prāhus tyāgaṃ vicakṣaṇāḥ ||.*

erroneously thought that in the Āgamasiddhānta all actions are renounced, for there is a great variety of specific actions [performed therein].”<sup>380</sup>

These verses are worth summarising because they strongly indicate that the Āgamasiddhānta was still a living tradition in the early part of the fourteenth century, when Vedāntadeśika composed the PRR. Moreover, this passage very much reads like a defence of the Āgamasiddhānta against a very specific accusation - namely, that of renouncing ritual action. Who, in the eyes of Vedāntadeśika, might have been “erroneously” suggesting that Āgamasiddhāntins do not engage in ritual action? Such an accusation is not, after all, included in the various objections against the Pāñcarātra which are listed in Yāmuna’s ĀP. First of all, it should be noted that Vedāntadeśika’s contention that Āgamasiddhāntins renounce only the desire which ordinarily motivates ritual action - i.e. they do not renounce ritual action *itself* - is supported by the PādS’s Caryāpāda, from which the above half-*śloka* is taken, as well as by several Āgamasiddhānta sources.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, it is significant that the PādS, like the PauṣS and the PārS, does actually on occasion refer to this renunciation of “desire” as simply the “renunciation of action” (*karmasaṃnyāsa*).<sup>382</sup> In other words, there is scriptural support for Vedāntadeśika’s aforementioned interpretation of PādS *cp* 19.117ab, not least in the PādS itself. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, then, this suggests that the accusation that Āgamasiddhāntins do not engage in ritual action might have come from somewhere other than the Mantrasiddhānta, the tradition to which the majority of the PādS belonged.

The most likely source of this criticism is perhaps the Vaikhānasa tradition. According to Gérard Colas (1990: 24-25), the Vaikhānasa *Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa* states that the Pāñcarātra “is esteemed by hermits (*vanastha*) and ascetics (*yatin*)”, and several other Vaikhānasa works cited by Colas also include the claim that (in Colas’ words) “while the Vaikhānasa cult is citadine, the Pāñcarātra is prescribed for

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<sup>380</sup> PRR 9.17-10.1: *ata āgamasiddhānte sarvakarmasvarūpatyāga iti na bhramitavyam, karmaviśeṣa-bhūyastvāt.*

<sup>381</sup> See for example PādS *cp* 21.34c-36, where Āgamasiddhāntins are said to be devoted to the *pañcakāla* ritual system, and to worship God “without desire” (*nirāśa*). Among Āgamasiddhānta sources, see for instance PauṣS 27.4 and 38.28c-32, and PārS 15.14c-18.

<sup>382</sup> See for example PādS *cp* 21.35cd, PauṣS 38.32cd and PārS 15.16cd.

far away places, outside towns, on a hill or a mountain, near a river or an ocean, in forests”. Such descriptions of the Pāñcarātra as a renunciative tradition as opposed to an urban, temple-based cult must, of course, be assessed alongside the context from which they emerged. Elsewhere, Colas (1995: 117) addresses this issue when he writes of the opposition between “les deux écoles āgamiques, celles-ci s’affrontant pour obtenir le contrôle du rituel dans les temples de l’Inde du Sud” (“The two Āgamic schools [i.e. the Vaikhānasa and the Pāñcarātra] which clashed with one another in the attempt to gain control of ritual in the temples of South India”). Of particular relevance to the question we are addressing presently, Colas (ibid: 117-118) notes that : “À l’époque de Vedānta Deśika, les querelles entre les desservants de temple se réclamant de l’une et de l’autre école āgamique vishnuite ne cessent de croître et de s’étendre avec la prolifération des temples publics” (“At the time of Vedanta Desika, the quarrels between the temple priests claiming [allegiance to] one or other Vaiṣṇava Āgamic school continue to grow and expand with the proliferation of public temples”). Further on, moreover, Colas (ibid: 119) suggests that Vaikhānasa authors may have been directing their criticisms at one Pāñcarātra group *in particular*, namely those who had abandoned their Vedic *sūtra*. “C’est peut-être cette partie de l’école pāñcarātra”, writes Colas, “que les manuels des prêtres vaikhānasa visaient à stigmatiser” (“It is perhaps this branch of the Pāñcarātra school which the manuals of the Vaikhānasa priests aimed at stigmatising”).

If Colas is correct, it would seem quite likely, then, that in his PRR Vedāntadeśika is defending the Āgasiddhānta against criticisms which were coming from within the Vaikhānasa tradition. After all, the Āgasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas are those Pāñcarātrikas who, according to both the ĀP (169.7ff) and the PRR (4.5ff), had “abandoned” the *dharma* of the triple Veda (*trayīdharmā*) in order to follow the Gr̥hyasūtras of their “own *śākhā*”. In addition, when the PauṣS (27.637d) refers to “those who have abandoned mixed worship” (*vyāmiśrārādhanojjhitāḥ*), we can assume that it is the Ekāyanas who are meant. Irrespective of the source of these criticisms, this discussion raises another possible explanation as to why Vedāntadeśika, who himself did *not* abandon allegiance to the “triple Veda” as the highest scriptural authority, might have sought to defend the

Āgamasiddhāntins, who had abandoned that allegiance. He may have sought to defend them not only because they held positions of influence at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam, but also because they were the Pāñcarātrikas who were especially subject to external criticism. Viewed in this way, the success of Vedāntadeśika's *Defence of the Pāñcarātra* would have rested in large part on the success of his defence of the Āgamasiddhānta. For if criticisms of the Āgamasiddhānta could be used to denounce the Pāñcarātra in general, a successful defence of the latter could be built upon a persuasive vindication of the former.

If authors belonging to the Vaikhānasa tradition occasionally ignored the internal divisions within the Pāñcarātra and resorted to branding the Pāñcarātra in general as “non-Vedic” (*avaidika*), or as devoted only to the attainment of *mokṣa*, or as not concerned with temple worship etc.,<sup>383</sup> then Vedāntadeśika, like Yāmuna before him, also attempted to present a unified and coherent Pāñcarātra “system”, adherence to which would not contravene allegiance to the Veda.<sup>384</sup> On occasion, as we might expect, Vedāntadeśika's presentation of a harmonious Pāñcarātra system contains ideas drawn from distinct Pāñcarātra traditions which seem to contradict one another.<sup>385</sup> However, generally his account is quite consistent. Although the PRR, unlike Yāmuna's ĀP, does contain a number of descriptions of the Siddhānta divisions, as well as passages drawn from the scriptural literature which warn against “mixing” the Siddhāntas, Vedāntadeśika also attempts to minimise the importance of any internal “conflict”. Having quoted the PādS's (*cp* 19.113c-128b) account of the Siddhānta divisions, for example, he is keen to point out that its descriptions of the Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas are in agreement with those given in the PauṣS. “If there is sameness of meaning between the two texts”, says Vedāntadeśika, “then there is no contradiction” (*yadi dvayor granthayor aikārthyam sambhavati tadā na virodhaḥ*, PRR 11.18-19). Moreover, as we have seen, in the presentation of the PRR

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<sup>383</sup> See Colas (1990) for a list of Vaikhānasa classifications of the Pāñcarātra.

<sup>384</sup> See especially PRR 21.7ff, which asserts the validity and authority of Pāñcarātrika prescriptions for the installation and worship of the image of Viṣṇu when prescriptions for these rites are not contained in the Vedas (that is, other than for the Baudhāyana, Vaikhānasa and Śaunaka schools).

<sup>385</sup> See for example PRR 3.7-12, wherein the Pāñcarātra is alternatively called the “fifth Veda” and “the root of the great Veda-tree” – the latter description being borrowed from PārS 1.76ab.

the supremacy of the Āgamasiddhānta is not a “sectarian” issue, but one on which even the PādS, a work predominantly of the Mantrasiddhānta, is in agreement.

Indeed, it is precisely this depiction of a universally acknowledged hierarchy of Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas which is key to Vedāntadeśika’s mitigating what is probably the most characteristic feature of Pāñcarātrika “sectarianism”, namely the prohibition against the “mixing” of Siddhāntas. For it is in this context that he quotes, without attribution, a passage which claims that Pāñcarātrikas are not only qualified to perform the rites of their “own” Siddhānta, they are also eligible for the ritual systems (*tantra*) of those Siddhāntas which are “lower” than their own. Thus, since the Āgamasiddhānta is at the top of the hierarchy, its members are also entitled to worship according to the systems prescribed by the Mantra, Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas. A Mantrasiddhāntin, meanwhile, is also qualified for the Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, while a Tantrasiddhāntin is qualified in addition for the Tantrāntarasiddhānta. Likewise, members of each Siddhānta have the authority to worship in places which have been established by a Siddhānta “inferior” to their own. This means that, according to this account, Āgamasiddhāntins have the entitlement to worship in any Pāñcarātra temple, while Tantrāntarasiddhāntins appear to be restricted to worshipping in their own homes.<sup>386</sup>

How are we to interpret these claims, and the inclusion of this passage in the PRR? Vedāntadeśika does not name the source of these verses, which is fairly unusual in this work, and I have been not been able to locate them in the scriptural literature. The most striking claim contained here is that members of the Āgamasiddhānta have the authority to perform all rites which are enjoined by the Mantrasiddhānta, the implication being that they can execute this entitlement without being guilty of “mixing Siddhāntas”, or of leaving their own Siddhānta and entering another. Vedāntadeśika then quotes another unnamed source which reinforces this idea by

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<sup>386</sup> PRR 13.9-14.4: *punar apy uparyupari tantrasthitānām adho 'dhas tantrādhikāritvam uktam – tantrāntare tathā tantramantrasiddhāntavartmani* (corr. *tantra-mantra siddhāntavartmani*) */ dīkṣitānām krameṇaiva hy uparyupari yogataḥ / anyeṣāṃ adhikāraḥ syāt tattatsaṃskārapūrvakam // kāraṇāgamasiddhāntaniṣṭhenañyais tribhiḥ sadā / arcanīyam athānyābhyāṃ mantrasiddhāntinā tathā // pūjanīyam athānyena tantrasiddhāntināniṣam / svena tantrāntareṇaiva pūjanīyam svake grhe // iti / atrāpy utkr̥ṣṭasiddhāntasthitenāpi apakr̥ṣṭasiddhāntasthāneṣu tattatsiddhānta-prakāreṇaiva pūjanīyatvam uktam.*

stating that “if they are qualified for the principle [ordinance], [then] they are qualified for the secondary [ordinance]” (*mukhyādikāriṇaḥ santi yadi gaṇḍādhikāriṇaḥ*, PRR 14.6).

Could these unnamed sources possibly reflect and validate actual processes which were then taking place? In other words, *were* Āgamasiddhāntins affiliating themselves with the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra traditions? We can be fairly sure that the latter had by this time become the more dominant, so a transition of this nature would certainly have been expedient. Can this help to explain why non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptures begin to incorporate Āgamasiddhāntin canonical systems, such as the idea of the Ekāyanaveda and the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS, within their own? And can it also help to explain the apparent disappearance of the Āgamasiddhānta, not only as a named Pāñcarātra tradition, but also as a strand within the Pāñcarātra whose representatives claimed the superiority of their own tradition over that of the Veda?

These questions are very difficult to answer at present, and new sources may come to light which cast doubt upon their validity. It should also be restated that Vedāntadeśika quotes these unnamed sources alongside passages from the PārS, for example, which explicitly prohibit the mixing of Siddhāntas (*siddhāntasāṃkarya*, see e.g. PRR 18.15-19.5, quoting PārS 19.545-548b). He also mentions that according to the PārS and the *Kālottara*, entering a superior Siddhānta by abandoning an inferior one is not a fault, whereas abandoning a superior ‘Tantra’ (i.e. Siddhānta) to enter a “low” or “debased” one *is* a fault, and is equivalent to a mixing of Tantras (i.e. separate ‘systems’).<sup>387</sup> Nonetheless, the processes proposed above, wherein Āgamasiddhāntins take on the practices of the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra traditions, could certainly help to explain how it was that the culture of Pāñcarātrika sectarianism gave way to the synthesis of previously distinct groups.

Such processes could also, of course, help to explain the content of some of the passages which I have addressed in Chapter Eight: the fact that Ekāyana authors of the PauṣS changed their earlier position on “mixed worship”, for instance, and that they

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<sup>387</sup> PRR 28.16-19: ... *apakṛṣṭasiddhāntaparityāgenāpi utkṛṣṭasiddhāntapraveśanam na doṣāya; pratyuta gaṇḍāyaiva; utkṛṣṭatantraparityāgena nikṛṣṭatantrapraveśane samānatantrasaṃkare ca doṣa ity uktam.*

began to address, and promise rewards to, worshippers who “desire fruits” (*phalārthin*); and also the verses in the PārS and the ĪS which authorise the worship, albeit “without devotion and loyalty”, of Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities, irrespective of the “distress” that this may cause to those “of little understanding”. It should also be borne in mind that reparation rites (*prāyaścitta*) were devised by the traditions which authored these texts in the event that a “mixing of Siddhāntas” or the abandoning of one Siddhānta for another should occur, and that the very existence of these rites suggests that such events *did* occur. Indeed, when taken together, these passages in the PauṣS, the PārS and the ĪS suggest that if Āgamasiddhāntins did begin to abandon their ideals and align themselves with more Veda-congruent patterns of worship, then this process began well before Vedāntadeśika’s time. The fact that the Āgamasiddhānta is still referred to as a living tradition in the PRR, as it is also in presumably younger works such as the ĪS and the ŚrīprśS, indicates, of course, that it could not have reached its completion until a later date.

### *iii.) Conclusions*

Vedāntadeśika’s defence of the Āgamasiddhānta appears to indicate that this tradition was especially subject to external criticism. This criticism may have come from within the Vaikhānasa tradition. We know that Vaikhānasas were present in Śrīraṅgam. In my view it is unlikely, however, that criticism from this source would have had a significant impact on the decline of the Āgamasiddhānta. If I am correct in proposing that the Āgamasiddhānta was integrated into other Pāñcarātra traditions, then an important question remains. Why did this happen? Why, for example, did it not happen the other way round? The fact that Āgamasiddhāntins appear to have been a minority within the South Indian Pāñcarātra may have been a partial cause of the direction that this integrative process appears to have taken, but it is not an explanation. Why, then, were Āgamasiddhāntins a minority?

The obvious answer to this question is one that I have mentioned already. Non-Āgamasiddhāntin Pāñcarātrikas held a distinct advantage over Āgamasiddhāntins in that they claimed membership within a genuine Vedic *śākhā*. It is quite likely, as we have seen in Chapter Five, that some South Indian Pāñcarātrikas did genuinely come from orthodox Brahminical backgrounds. Yāmuna, recall, was prepared to vouch for the fact that the Pāñcarātrika Bhāgavatas belonged to the Vājasaneyāśākhā. Of course, Yāmuna also claims that the Ekāyanas belong to a Vedic *śākhā*. However, owing to the fact that there was no record of such a Vedic school, it is considerably less likely that this claim would have been accepted by outsiders. Undoubtedly, if non-Āgamasiddhāntins could persuasively affiliate themselves with Vedic tradition, this would have made them more attractive in the eyes of prospective patrons. Moreover, in a commercially competitive environment wherein the ritual expertise of professional priests would have been shaped to a great extent by the needs of their clients, the Ekāyanas had given themselves a distinct disadvantage. For they could not promise these clients, as reward for loyalty and generous support, the attainment of liberation at death. The best they could offer them, soteriologically speaking, was rebirth as an Ekāyana.





## CONCLUSIONS

I will conclude with a historically chronological summary of the findings of this thesis. I have shown that the earliest textual source which refers to a ‘Pāñcarātra’ tradition, namely the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*, datable in its present form to the fourth or fifth century CE, presents the emergence of this tradition as the outcome of a process whereby previously distinct religious identities and soteriological methods were assimilated and subordinated to a devotional religion centred on Nārāyaṇa (Chapter Seven). Several centuries subsequent to the composition of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, numerous textual sources attest to there being distinct groups either “within” or related to a loosely organised Pāñcarātra tradition. These sources include a number of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās dating from the ninth to eleventh centuries, in particular the *Sātvatasamhitā*, the *Jayākhyasamhitā*, the *Pauṣkarasamhitā* and the *Sanatkumārasamhitā*, in addition to several works external to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus. Among the latter we can count Rājānaka Ratnākara’s ninth century *Haravijaya* and Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s tenth century *Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa*, both produced in Kashmir, as well as South Indian texts such as the ninth-tenth century Vaikhānasa *Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa*, and Yāmuna’s eleventh-twelfth century *Āgamaprāmāṇya*. In these works, Pāñcarātra groups are distinguished from each other by a variety of means including philosophical doctrine, soteriology, ritual practice, social class, mode of living, and religious symbol. There is little consistency in the accounts of different Pāñcarātra groups before the late eleventh or early twelfth century, at which time a number of descriptions of four Pāñcarātra ‘Siddhāntas’ appear in several South Indian scriptural works. Some of these works, most notably the *Pādmāsamhitā* and the *Pārameśvarasamhitā*, point to there being, during this period, a sectarian animosity between two Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas in particular. These two Siddhāntas primarily distinguished themselves from one another on the basis of their scriptural allegiance (Chapter Two). The more textually prolific of these groups called itself ‘Mantrasiddhānta’ and claimed that its teachings were “rooted in the Veda” (*vedamūlatā*). The textual evidence suggests that this tradition was increasingly concerned with presenting itself as conforming to

orthodox norms, though it continued to address itself to a wider social audience than was acceptable to those who maintained those norms (Chapter Four). Authors belonging to the less textually prolific tradition, called ‘Āgamasiddhānta’, made the claim that their scriptures are rooted in an original teaching called ‘Ekāyanaveda’. The identity of this Ekāyanaveda is uncertain, though a later scriptural work, namely the (probably fourteenth century) *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā*, assumes it to have been a collective label for the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, *Sātvatasāṃhitā* and *Paṇḍarasāṃhitā*. The twelfth-thirteenth century *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* and the thirteenth-fourteenth century *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, both of which claim affiliation with the Ekāyanaveda, interpret *ekāyana* as meaning “the only way” (i.e. to liberation), though this is very likely a significant revision of the original sense of this term.

According to Mantrasiddhānta authors, members of the Āgamasiddhānta were not qualified to act as professional temple priests performing rituals on behalf of others, though Āgamasiddhāntins disputed this. Such disagreements point to the likelihood that these two Pāñcarātra traditions were in competition with each other for the control of temples in South India, a theory which also finds support in other textual passages (Chapter Five). However, this period of sectarian animosity, which was probably current for a period during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did not last long, and the main reason for this appears to have been that the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas could not compete effectively with their more orthodox rivals. This was, no doubt, primarily due to the fact that they could not claim affiliation with a genuine Vedic school (*śākhā*), and in the Śrīvaiṣṇava-influenced orthodox religious environment of South India at this time were therefore less attractive than the Mantrasiddhāntins in the eyes of prospective patrons. However, another cause of the inability of Āgamasiddhāntins to compete effectively with their rivals may well have been self-inflicted. I refer here to the Āgamasiddhāntins’ understanding of their own tradition as one in which membership is conferred by birth rather than initiation. This meant that since the Āgamasiddhānta was, in their way of thinking, “the only way” to liberation (*mokṣa*), Āgamasiddhāntins could not promise the achievement of this goal to prospective patrons from outside their own tradition – they could only offer them the promise of

a rebirth within the Āgamasiddhānta. In this respect the Mantrasiddhāntins held a distinct advantage since, for them, the ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*) was enough to establish the patron's eligibility to achieve liberation at death.

An apparent consequence of the greater resources available to the Mantrasiddhānta in their efforts to attract royal patronage was that some members of the Āgamasiddhānta began to incorporate into their repertoire the same ritual practices that their Mantrasiddhāntin rivals engaged in – practices that their own tradition (i.e. the Āgamasiddhānta) had previously condemned (Chapters Eight to Nine). These included rituals granting rewards to those desirous of the “fruits” of worship (*phalārthin*), as well as acts of “mixed worship” such as the worship of Viṣṇu's subordinate deities. By these means, the religious identities of these two Pāñcarātra traditions began to merge. This gave rise to a culture which made a concerted effort to integrate the distinct Pāñcarātra traditions. One of the outcomes of this process, or a means by which it occurred, was the formation of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon, a project which appears to have been especially important to the composers and redactors of the Saṃhitās during the fourteenth century (Chapters One and Three).

Insofar as is possible, I have attempted to locate Pāñcarātra texts within the sociohistorical context summarised here, though it is clearly the case that not all such works can be located there. I refer here in particular to the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* and the *Lakṣmītantra*, neither of which appear to belong to the “sectarian” Pāñcarātra culture within which many of the extant South Indian Saṃhitās were produced (Chapter Six). Moreover, several texts appear to have been composed by members of distinct Pāñcarātra traditions, and thus do not belong in their entirety to one *milieu* or another. Thus, it is clear that portions of the *Paṇḍarāsaṃhitā* were authored by Ekāyanas, while other sections of this text were authored by other types of Pāñcarātrika. Naturally, without paleographical support, any attempt to distinguish between the historical layers of a text remains speculative, and any conclusions arrived at must be tentative and open to revision. This is the position I take on my own comments on the historical layers of the *Paṇḍarāsaṃhitā*, a text which in its

present corrupt and fragmentary form can invite only tentative judgements, as well as on material I identify as having been interpolated into other texts.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AP	<i>Agnipurāṇa</i>
AS	<i>Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā</i>
ĀḌ	<i>Āgamaḍambara</i>
ĀP	<i>Āgamaprāmāṇya</i>
ĪS	<i>Īśvarasaṃhitā</i>
JS	<i>Jayākhyasaṃhitā</i>
TĀ	<i>Tantrāloka</i>
TV	<i>Tantravārttika</i>
NārS	<i>Nārādīyasaṃhitā</i>
NPP	<i>Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa</i>
ParS	<i>Paramasaṃhitā</i>
PRR	<i>Pāñcarātrarakṣā</i>
PādS	<i>Pādmasaṃhitā</i>
PārS	<i>Pārameśvarasaṃhitā</i>
PauṣS	<i>Pauṣkarasaṃhitā</i>
BSBh	<i>Brahmasūtrabhāṣya</i>
BhG	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
BhT	<i>Bhārgavatantra</i>
BhBhD	<i>Bhāratabhāvadīpa</i>
MārKs	<i>Mārkaṇḍeyasaṃhitā</i>
MBh	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
LT	<i>Lakṣmītantra</i>
ViśS	<i>Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā</i>
ViṣṇuS	<i>Viṣṇusaṃhitā</i>
ViṣS	<i>Viṣvakṣenasaṃhitā</i>
VDhP	<i>Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa</i>
ŚrīpurS	<i>Śrīpuruṣottamasaṃhitā</i>
ŚrīprśS	<i>Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā</i>
SanS	<i>Sanatkumārasaṃhitā</i>
SāPr	<i>Sātvatārthaprakāśikā</i>
SK	<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i>
STbh	<i>Sātvatatāntrabhāṣya</i>
SP	<i>Samvitprakāśa</i>
SpPr	<i>Spandapradīpikā</i>
SvT	<i>Svacchandatantra</i>
SS	<i>Sātvatasamhita</i>



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